

5.0 BACKGROUND AND FORCES

"We stand at a junction, with roads leading to both abject defeat and glorious victory. In order to choose the right path to follow we need first to look back along the road that has led us to this point..."

Commissar Yarrick

Now that you know how the rules of Epic work it is time to introduce you to the history of the planet where the game is set and the forces under your command. In this section we provide an overview of the galaxy of the 41st Millennium, and then a detailed history of the cataclysmic conflict that is taking place on the Imperial hive world known as Armageddon. Finally, we provide details of the different Space Marine, Imperial Guard and Ork troops and vehicles that are fighting on the planet. Future Epic supplements will add new campaign settings to the Epic system and introduce new armies for you to use.

THE AGE OF THE IMPERIUM

"In the grim darkness of the far future there is only war!"

For 10,000 years, the galaxy-spanning Imperium of Mankind has been the bastion of the human race. With over a million worlds and a population running into countless thousands of billions, it is the largest empire in the galaxy of the 41st Millennium. For a hundred long centuries, the Imperium has endured, surviving disasters, heresies and invasions from alien races intent on the extinction of humanity. It has resisted all of this through its greatest strengths – the immortal Beneficent Emperor of Mankind and his vast armies and fleets.

Though the Emperor is a shattered, withered creature, he still watches over and guides humankind from the restorative essences, elixirs and billowing alchemical gases of the Golden Throne of Terra. Through his vast psychic powers, the Emperor directs the Imperium's warships through the nightmare realm of warp space. He foresees the possible futures of the human race, and steers humanity so that it may overcome the many trials and challenges ahead.

Without the Emperor, the Imperium would be unable to move its armies and fleets to combat its enemies and enforce its rule. The Imperium would degenerate into a hundred small empires clamouring for power while aliens and other monstrous creatures devoured and destroyed Mankind.

The tide of the Emperor's enemies is only held back by the vigilance of the Imperial fleets and the weapons of humanity's armies. Millions of soldiers fight over a thousand worlds against every conceivable type of foe: from the all-consuming hive fleets of the Tyranids and the rampaging invasions of the warmongering Orks, to rebellion and insurrection from within.

Alongside the vast might of the Imperial Guard, the superhuman Space Marines of the Adeptus Astartes bring terror and death to the Emperor's foes. The elite Space Marines are the deadliest fighting force humanity can send to battle – just a few squads of these genetically engineered warriors can crush an army of foes many times their number. In the cold depths of space gigantic battleships, accompanied by armadas of other vessels, bring battle to raiding Eldar pirates and Ork hulks.

Internecine wars are commonplace and often Mankind faces its greatest threat from within. Rebel governors, corrupt commanders, alien-possessed officials and even the Primarchs of the Space Marines have all turned against their peers and spilt human blood in the Imperium's long, war-torn history.

The Imperium itself is inconceivably vast, spanning many thousands of light years that require months, even years, of travel to traverse it. A million worlds with a million different

cultures make up humanity, and the discovery of new star systems and new planets are forever expanding the Emperor's domains, fuelling Mankind's eternal hunger for more resources, more space.

Even to systems close to Earth, the Emperor and the Imperium he embodies are but names for distant, almost supernatural forces, that are revered and praised from afar. Many citizens labour their entire lives, overcoming strife and toiling hard to survive the adversity of life in the 41st Millennium, without even being aware of the Imperium except as a children's story. For others, the Imperium is very real, the iron fist of control tight around their lives, instilling the law and order Mankind must have to prevail.

Harsh discipline and little mercy are essential for survival in these turbulent times. It is an age of great upheaval for humanity. With every passing year more and more people display powerful psychic talents. If these rogue psykers are not controlled or purged, the erratic and awesome forces they can unwittingly unleash may destroy whole settlements, even worlds. Those with the necessary mental strength and fortitude can be trained by the forces of the Imperium to use their strange powers to benefit Mankind.

Those who lack this power of will must be cleansed. Citizens with psychic talents who are left free to roam will often become unwitting pawns of malevolent warp entities, who use the increased mental powers of untrained psykers to bridge the gap between their realm in warp space and the galaxy of Mankind. From here they spread their dominance, creating slaves of whole planetary populations and destroying the fabric of the Imperium from the inside.

Other mutations are becoming rife. A malignant epidemic of misshapen and evil creatures threatens to turn humanity into a race of degenerated beasts, unable to defend themselves from the forces that oppose them. The pogroms against mental and physical deviants cannot falter, lest Mankind be engulfed and consumed by the powerful evolutionary processes at work. These abhorrent elements must be crushed or somehow tamed if Mankind is to survive the transformation into a new era of spiritual and physical supremacy.

As powerful as it is, the Imperium does not rule the entire galaxy. Mankind's worlds are spread thin across the 200,000,000,000 stars that make up the galaxy. Within the Imperium's vague borders are rebellious enclaves of human worlds, domains ruled over by alien war leaders, colonies of creatures too aloof or basic to disturb Mankind or draw the attention of the war fleets. The Imperium is engulfed in a constant state of war, sometimes simply continuing its wars of expansion, other times fighting against foes who threaten the survival of the entire human race.

The vast size of the Imperium makes a mockery of any true form of governance above that of the Imperial Commanders. These individuals are appointed by the Adeptus Terra to rule over a world or worlds in the Emperor's name. They are bound to co-operate with other servants of the Emperor and to control mutations and heresy in their domains, but on the whole they are free to implement Imperial Law in any way they see fit or necessary.

Above and beyond these planetary governors, vast organisations attempt to hold back the seething anarchy that constantly threatens to engulf the Imperium. The innumerable clerks, scribes, logisters and archivists of the Administratum attempt to instil some form of order to this haphazard empire, recording, requesting and analysing a torrent of information from the furthest corners of the galaxy.

Imperial Guard regiments, each numbering tens of thousands of soldiers and tanks, are raised and transported to distant war zones every day, their efforts supported by the millions of quartermasters and logisticians of the Departmento Munitorum. The Space Marines of the Adeptus Astartes send forth their elite warriors to do battle with alien monstrosities and treacherous humans, pursuing their wars and expanding their dominions in the name of the Emperor. The ancient Adeptus Mechanicus sends forth its Explorator fleets to investigate and explore, uncovering ancient technologies for their masters on Mars to study and decipher.

The Tech-Priests continue the search that began long before the Emperor ascended to power and began the Great Crusade of Reconquest. The religious leaders of the Ministorum of Earth, or Ecclesiarchy as it is more widely known, preach the Imperial Creed of fervent faith to the Emperor and unswerving sacrifice to humanity and the Imperium. Their Missionaries and Battle Sisters bring the light of the Emperor to worlds unheard of by Mankind for countless millennia, while the zealous Confessors stir up devout citizens to cast out the heretic and unbeliever, leading witch hunts through overcrowded hive cities and across barren wastelands.

This seemingly haphazard morass of wars and politics, faith and retribution is bound together by loyalty to the Emperor and the common goal of racial survival. Complex agreements of trade and protection bring these organisations to common

ground, ancient loyalties and debts are exchanged for favours and goods. While the competition for power is strong, no one world or organisation within the Imperium can truly stand on its own against the horrors that threaten humanity. Despite the intrigue and double-dealing, the clamouring for resources and the endless wars and battles to be fought, Mankind struggles on through history on some pre-destined course towards destruction or greatness.

Mankind's protection by the Emperor is not without sacrifice, he does not survive on praise alone. At the very founding of the Imperium, as the Emperor and his Space Marine legions brought order to the anarchy left after the Age of Strife, a treachery of the most loathsome kind was perpetrated. The Emperor's most trusted commander, Horus, turned his back on the teachings of the Emperor and embraced the power offered by the dark gods that strive to enslave Mankind.

Terror and death reigned, as the Imperium was torn apart by internecine war. Worlds were ravaged, whole armies slaughtered, and the forces of Horus advanced upon Terra until the Imperium was on the verge of defeat. At the very last, the Emperor destroyed the traitorous Warmaster in single combat, but was himself left mortally injured.

To sustain the Emperor's shattered body a great device called the Golden Throne was devised and built. Using arcane techniques and machines whose function have long passed from true understanding, the Golden Throne fulfils its grim purpose. The Golden Throne is unique in the way it fuels the Emperor's needs, for the Emperor cannot eat as a man eats, or drink fluids or breathe air. His life has passed the point where such mortal things can sustain him.

For the Emperor the only viable sustenance is human life force – souls – and he has a great and insatiable appetite. Nor will just any human suffice for this purpose, for the soul-donor must be a very special person in their own right, someone with psychic powers. Sacrificed into the bizarre and archaic machinery of the Golden Throne, their life essence is slowly, agonisingly, leeched from their body to feed the Master of Mankind. Every day, hundreds must be consecrated to the Emperor in this dire manner if he, and therefore the Imperium and humanity, are to survive.



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IMPERIUS DOMINATUS

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SEGMENTUM
OBSCURUS

OCULAR
TERRIBUS

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2-5 WEEKS

1-3 WEEKS

ARMAGEDDON
SECTOR

1-2 MONTHS

4-7 WEEKS

3-7 WEEKS

ROUTE PROJECTION

3-4 MONTHS

3-6 MONTHS

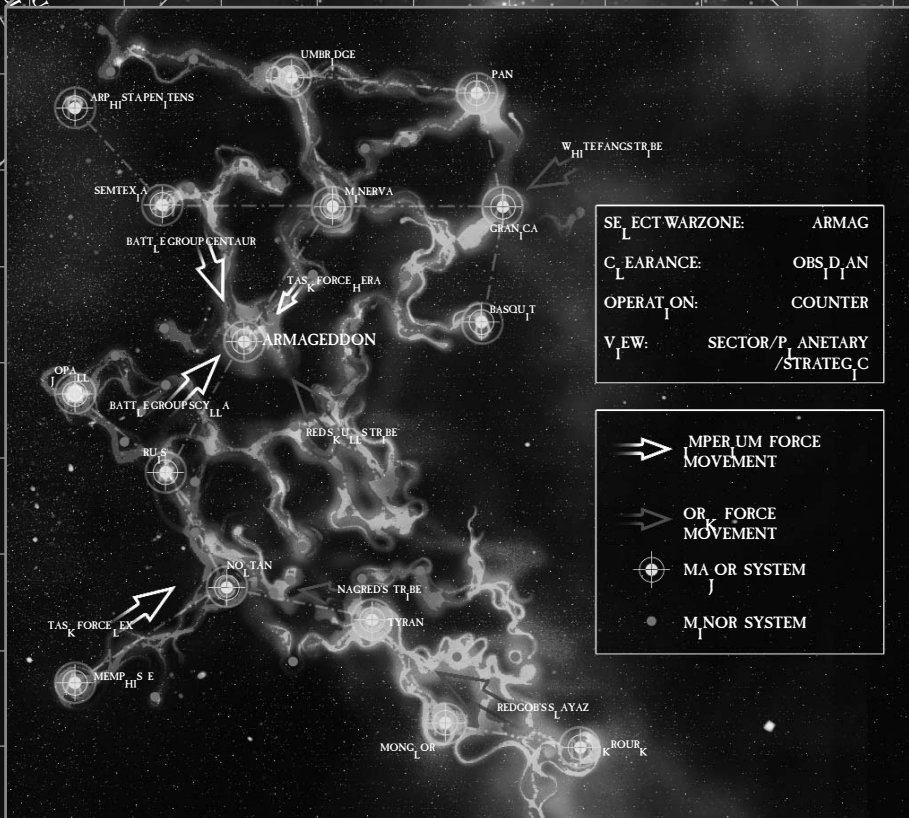
2-3 MONTHS

SEGMENTUM
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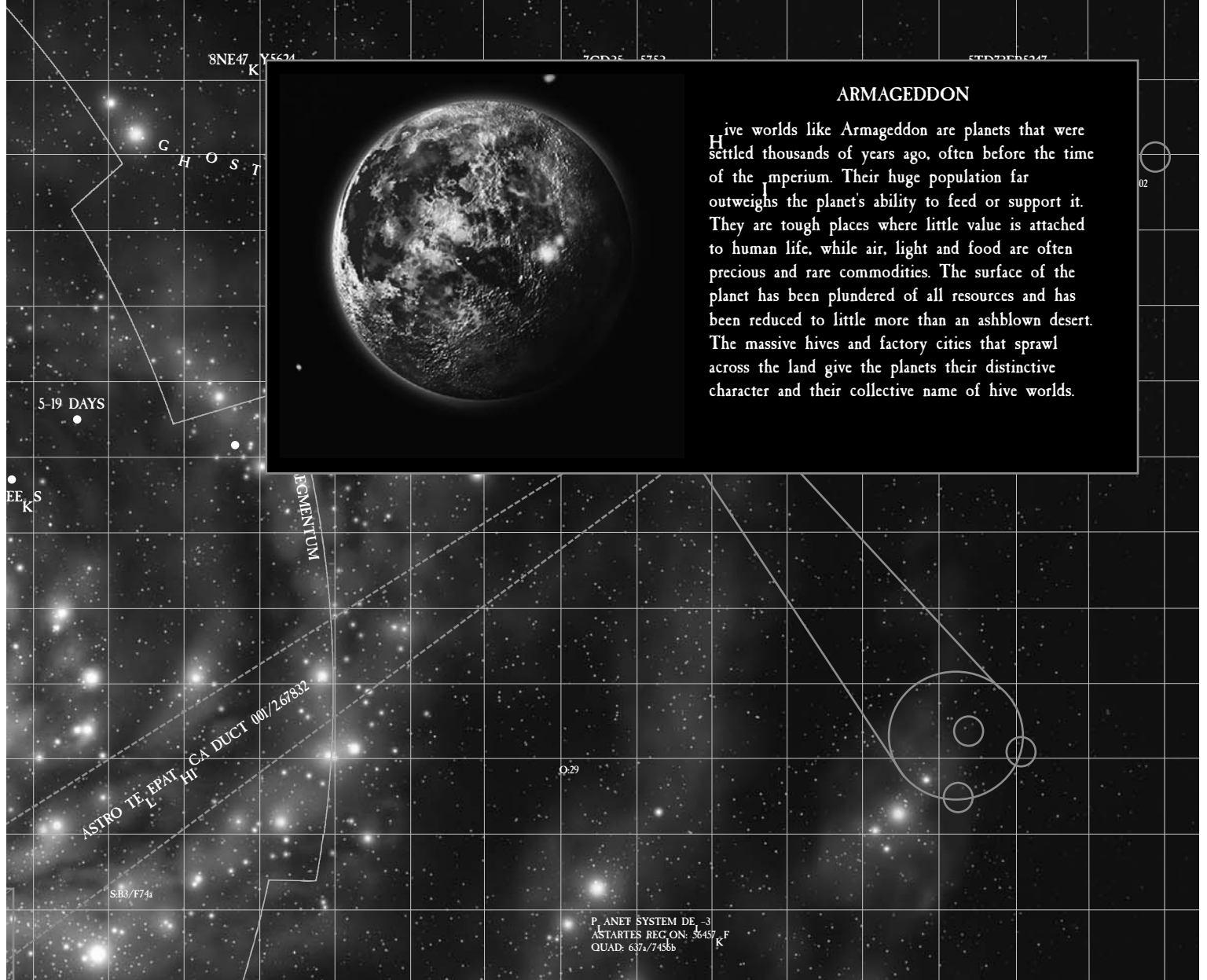
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SEGMENTUM
PACIFIC

DETAILED Rega Gamma Echo



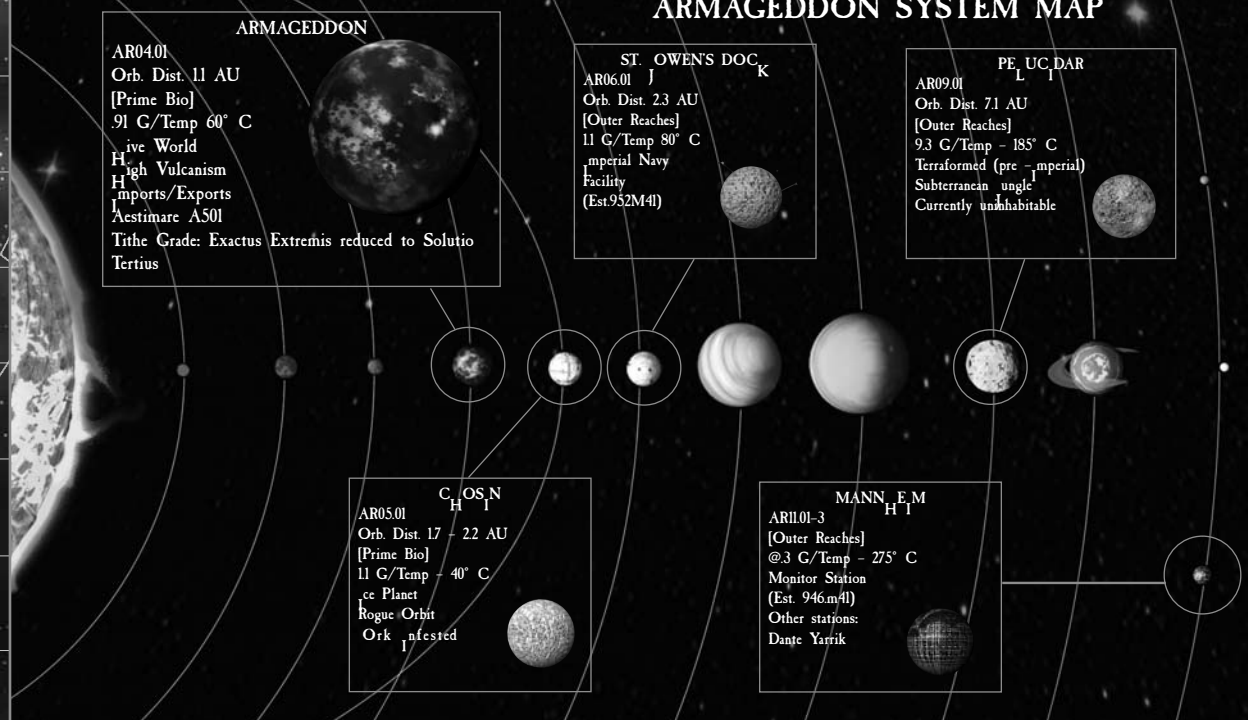
THESE ARE THE EMPEROR, AND HIS OUR SHIELD AND PROTECTOR



ARMAGEDDON

Hive worlds like Armageddon are planets that were settled thousands of years ago, often before the time of the Imperium. Their huge population far outweighs the planet's ability to feed or support it. They are tough places where little value is attached to human life, while air, light and food are often precious and rare commodities. The surface of the planet has been plundered of all resources and has been reduced to little more than an ashblown desert. The massive hives and factory cities that sprawl across the land give the planets their distinctive character and their collective name of hive worlds.

ARMAGEDDON SYSTEM MAP



GHAZGHKULL'S FIRST INVASION OF ARMAGEDDON

"Armageddon... a world whose name has become a byword for war and destruction..."

Lord Commander Solar Eugenia

In 941.M41, the Ork warlord Ghazghkull Thraka invaded Armageddon at the head of a massive Ork Waaagh. The hive world of Armageddon, the principle world in the Armageddon sector, lies roughly 10,000 light years to the galactic north east of Terra. It is a vital node at the centre of the Armageddon sector's navigational channels and its thousands of weapons shops supply arms to Imperial Guard regiments several thousand light years away.

The loss of Armageddon would pose a serious threat to the Imperium's power in this area of the galaxy, as was proved when a massive Chaos host invaded in the mid-41st Millennium. Although that titanic battle, known now as the First Battle for Armageddon, has long since passed into history, a more recent conflict has shown how vulnerable the Imperium's control is.

At the time of Ghazghkull's first invasion, Armageddon was under the command of Overlord Herman von Strab, who was once described by Princeps Prime Kurtiz Mannheim of the Legio Metalica as, "the greatest waste of flesh and bone born in the last five hundred years". It was von Strab's complete lack of preparation that cost the Imperium dearly.

Even when a hulk of massive size was sighted in the Armageddon system, von Strab did nothing to investigate or report its appearance to other Imperial authorities. When the Orks crashed onto the western continent of Armageddon Prime, von Strab sent out his planetary defence regiments piecemeal, and they were smashed to pieces by the vastly superior Ork armies. Armageddon Prime quickly capitulated, its supply lines were cut and Ork warriors stormed through

the tunnels of its hives. It was Commissar Yarrick who ordered the Astropaths to send a signal for aid, which earned him von Strab's displeasure and his subsequent exile to Hades Hive. However, it was this act which was to ultimately save Armageddon from falling to Ghazghkull.

Von Strab was not concerned with the loss of Armageddon Prime, declaring that the Orks would never be able to cross the thick jungles that separated them from Armageddon Secundus. He was wrong. Ghazghkull's forces swept out of the jungles and embarked on a massive conquest, crossing the Stygies and Diabolus rivers and marching on the hives of Armageddon Secundus.

Von Strab ordered Princeps Mannheim to lead his Titans into battle against the Ork armies, unsupported by other forces. Mannheim had little choice but to obey, though he knew that it would lead to the destruction of his forces. Although they inflicted heavy casualties on the Orks, the Legio Metalica were all but annihilated by the numerous Ork Gargants that opposed them. Everywhere the Imperial forces were being driven back in disarray.

The Orks swept onwards, storming Infernus Hive as the Season of Storms broke in full fury. Refugees numbering in tens of thousands marched across the inhospitable ash dunes, dying from exposure to the harsh environment or falling prey to the rampaging mobs of Ork Speed Freeks which constantly harried them in their flight.

As the Orks moved southwards they split, descending on the Hades and Helsreach hives. When the Orks besieged the massive cities, von Strab unleashed a secret weapon, a massive stock of virus bombs from his personal arsenals. However, the ancient devices frequently malfunctioned and although they took a heavy toll of the unprotected Orks, many humans were lost too as missiles flew out of control and plunged into Imperium lines or exploded in the refugee camps. At Helsreach, converted supertankers took those



unable to fight across the Tempest Ocean and, once the last ship had left, those who remained grimly swore to defend the city to the last man. Suicide teams charged into the Ork encampments and detonated home-made explosives, while the dockside loaders welded themselves into the armoured cabs of their cranes and fought with the gigantic Gargants rampaging across the city. The fighting was bitter, but in the end, Helsreach fell to the Orks.

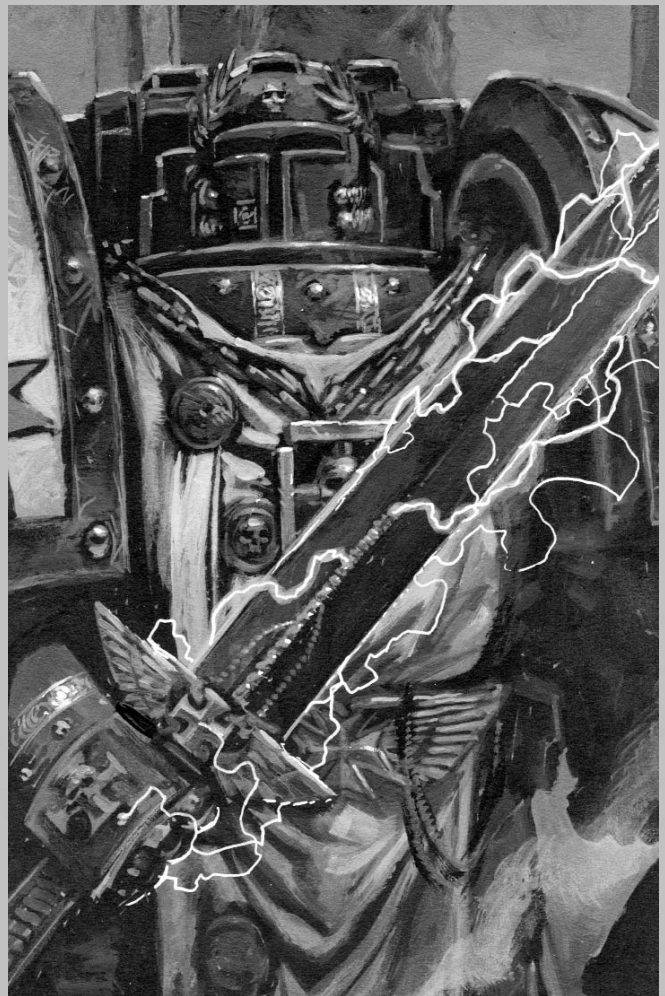
Although the battle for Armageddon had been ferocious, it was at Hades Hive that the conflict entered a new level of savagery and fierceness. Led by Commissar Yarrick, the defenders of Hades Hive fought as though they were possessed. The Orks made so little headway against such stiff resistance that Ghazghkull himself joined the attack, leading his forces from the front. Thus the stage was set for the greatest contest of wills in the entire war.

For weeks, Ghazghkull tried every stratagem taught to him by Gork and Mork: making lightning assaults and feints, attacking in massive waves and trying to reduce the hive by bombardment. Yarrick countered every ploy: sending out sabotage parties to destroy the Ork Warlord's siege engines, counter-attacking along a flank when the Orks tried to storm the barricades, and falling back from diversionary attacks to draw the Orks into ambushes. When Ghazghkull mustered all of his Kommandos into a huge infiltration force, Yarrick assembled volunteer cadres of men who were once maintenance workers in the labyrinth of the hive's air and fuel ducts. A deadly battle was fought in the darkness between these drug-crazed psychopaths and the Ork Kommandos, and in the end it is said that not a single Kommando escaped alive.

As Yarrick and Ghazghkull fought over Hades, the remaining Ork columns rumbled southwards towards the only other surviving settlements – Acheron and Tartarus. At Acheron, as the Orks made their assault, the defenders swore to die rather than surrender. Such dedication was admirable but, in the end, unnecessary. The Orks were ripped asunder by the thunder of bombs and the crash of gigantic cannons as the sky overhead filled with the shapes of Space Marine Thunderhawk gunships. The Blood Angels led the reinforcements, the military commanders of Armageddon ignoring von Strab's authority to follow Dante's legendary leadership. Von Strab was arrested for his crimes against the Imperium, though he later escaped.

With the coming of the Ultramarines, Salamanders and Blood Angels, the tide began to turn on Armageddon. The factories of Acheron and Tartarus churned out weapons and vehicles by their thousands, whilst the Space Marines began to force the Orks to retreat from the south. If Ghazghkull had turned his attention southwards and made immediate plans to thwart this sudden counter-attack, Armageddon may have still fallen. However, the siege of Hades Hive had become something more than simply a military objective. Yarrick's uncompromising resistance challenged Ghazghkull's ability and reputation as a Warlord – a challenge he could not back down from. The Ork Warlord gathered every available warband to his army and, with this almighty force, fell upon Hades Hive with the hatred an Ork only reserves for his greatest enemy. Despite desperate rationing, supplies in Hades had all but run out, and seeing the mass of Orks preparing to attack, Yarrick decided that the city could no longer stand. Those who could be were evacuated by daring shuttle runs, risking the Ork anti-aircraft fire and interceptors to escape.

The Space Marines arrived too late to save Hades, attacking the Orks even as they smashed their way inside. Yarrick was



almost slain, but his iron will stopped him succumbing to the near mortal wounds he had suffered. Whilst the fate of Hades was being sealed, Ghazghkull revealed the true extent of his cunning. Masses of Ork reinforcements poured in from the west, intent upon Tartarus Hive in the south. If Tartarus was overrun, the industrial power in the south would be smashed and the Orks could easily consolidate their position while the Imperial armies were being moved down from the north.

As the Orks assaulted Tartarus, their vanguard already pushing into the streets of the hive city, Dante made his move. Transporting his Blood Angels back to their orbiting ships, he led a massive drop pod assault into the heart of the Orks. Though horrendously outnumbered, the Blood Angels set to massacring any Ork unlucky enough to be caught by them.

Fuelled by their righteous hatred, the Blood Angels slew nearly half of the entire Ork army, and it was rumoured that Ghazghkull himself had been felled, though this later proved to be false. Leaderless and assaulted on all sides by the Emperor's forces, the Orks refused to surrender. Some fought to the death, others slipped into the ash wastes and eventually made their way to the jungles between the two continents of Armageddon.

As is the way with Orks, the greenskins were never fully eradicated from Armageddon, and it is unlikely that they ever will be. In the depths of the jungles and in the ruins of fallen hives they continue to breed, only to be hunted down by Imperial kill-teams. Hades Hive still lies shattered, whilst the rebuilding of Tartarus and Infernus has only just begun. The legacies of the Second Battle of Armageddon are still plain to see.



GHAZGHKULL'S SECOND INVASION OF ARMAGEDDON

"I'll be back..."

Warlord Ghazghkull Thraka

Ghazghkull was not idle following his defeat on Armageddon. Retiring to his stronghold – a network of systems controlled by his forces in the Golgotha Sector – he carried on with the master plan that had been revealed to him by Gork and Mork years before. If the Imperium made one terrible mistake following the war it was to consider that Ghazghkull had been defeated. This was far from the truth. What the Ork gods had revealed to Ghazghkull, or rather what he said they had revealed to him, was that in order to destroy your foe you must first know him. For Ghazghkull, the war had been a way to learn how the Imperium would react and deal with a major invasion. In effect, Ghazghkull had been doing little more than testing the Imperium's defences.

In the decades that followed the war, Ghazghkull carried on with his master plan. Having learned all he needed to know about Imperial strategy, he began practising the tactics that he felt would lead to his enemies' defeat. As he did not want to draw undue attention to himself, these experiments were carried out on a much smaller scale than the invasion of Armageddon. From 945 to 959.M41 the Imperium received numerous reports of small raids and attacks against Imperial bases and outposts that were led by Ghazghkull Thraka personally.

Then, in 962.M41, an Imperial military base on Buca III was annihilated by missiles fired from an Ork base hidden on an asteroid. The asteroid entered the system from deep space and bypassed all the Imperial sensors undetected before unleashing its deadly missiles at the unsuspecting outpost. In

972.M41 the Imperial agri-world of Chigon 17 was overrun by a massive force of Orks allegedly under Ghazghkull's command. Despite the fact that the Imperial Guard defenders were well-equipped with tanks and other vehicles, they were defeated by the Orks in a lengthy guerrilla campaign which rendered the Imperial defences utterly useless. In 986.M41 the Imperial Battlecruiser, the *Radiant Way*, along with its attending escorts were lost with all hands in a sudden attack by Ork pirates, again led by Ghazghkull. The Imperium responded in force, but discovered that the Orks had disappeared by the time they arrived.

Most recently, Ghazghkull allied with the Ork Warlord Nazdreg Ug Urdgrub to make a vicious assault on the Imperial planet Piscina IV. The Orks used a previously unknown type of teleportation device which enabled them to manoeuvre their troops directly onto the planet from a space hulk located a massive distance away from the planet. The Imperial garrison was taken completely by surprise and only the presence of Space Marines from the Dark Angels Chapter saved Piscina from being overrun by the alien hordes.

However, this second defeat was of little consequence to Ghazghkull, for, with the completion and testing of his new 'tellyporta', he was finally ready to unleash his full force against the Imperium. A plan that had been fifty years in the making was about to reach fruition...

Meanwhile on Armageddon, a lengthy investigation of the planet's readiness and defences was begun in 948.M41. In light of the strategic value of Armageddon to the Imperium, extensive works were ordered by the Adeptus of Terra to secure the Armageddon system against future attacks. Sector Naval command was transferred to the Armageddon system and the Naval facility of St. Jowen's Dock was rebuilt and expanded to accommodate all classes of interstellar warship.

In addition, three permanently manned monitor stations

were established in the outer reaches, named after three great heroes of the second war of Armageddon; Mannheim, Dante and Yarrick. Ground based and orbital defences were rebuilt and heavily reinforced, minefields were seeded throughout the system and a substantial increase in the numbers of system ships and monitors was ordered.

On Armageddon itself, the long process of rebuilding the hives devastated by Ghazghkull's hordes was begun. A process which, despite massive application of resources and manpower, remained incomplete fifty years later. In part, this was due to the increased number of defence regiments which were raised over this period, despite a lowering of Armageddon's tithe of regiments destined for the Imperial Guard. A military council was appointed to rule over Armageddon, comprising high ranking representatives from the Imperial Guard, Navy, Departamento Munitorium and Adeptus Mechanicus, the Ecclesiarchy and the Governor of each of the major hives on Armageddon. The council was headed by General Kurov of the Imperial Guard, a respected veteran of the Bakkus Crusade. From 949.M41 to 978.M41, General Kurov coordinated a series of xenocidal campaigns conducted throughout the equatorial jungles between Armageddon Primus and Secundus and the ice-bound world of Chosin to eliminate Ork infestations which sprang up in the aftermath of Ghazghkull's invasion. Fifty years passed and Armageddon rose from the ashes, its defences stronger and more powerful than they had ever been before. Still it was not enough.

The first signs of the coming storm was a series of attacks on systems surrounding Armageddon and other worlds nearby. First the nearby world of Minerva suffered the depredations of Ork pirates, then the Agri-world of Ruis was likewise assailed. Over a period of months, in spite of the best efforts of the Imperial Navy, the number of merchant ships reaching Armageddon was cut by half. It was as though an unseen presence knew that the Imperial forces were bound by the need to guard the Armageddon system and were not free to patrol the sector as freely as they should. Almost overnight, the pirate raids grew into assaults on outposts and then into attacks against lightly-held colonies and satellites. Soon, the first full-scale planetary invasions began. Two dozen Imperial worlds came under attack in as many hours and the Astropaths of Armageddon received constant reports of yet more Ork assaults. Every consultation of the Emperor's Tarot showed bloodshed, destruction and the sign of the Beast Resurgent. Rumours spread that Ghazghkull was returning to wreak his vengeance, and soon even the most obstinate bureaucrat could no longer deny that an Ork Waaagh of gargantuan proportions was engulfing the Armageddon sector. After Task Force Trajan was presumed lost battling Orks in the Desdena system, General Kurov sent forth a call to nearby Imperial Guard regiments and Space Marine Chapters to muster in defence of Armageddon.

On the Day of the Feast of the Emperor's Ascension, fifty seven years to the day after the first Ork invasion, augur probes registered a massive disruption in the Immaterium as an Ork fleet tore its way back into reality and Ghazghkull's hordes descended on Armageddon once more. An alert from monitor station Dante was cut off in mid-transmission as the Ork ships swept past in their hundreds.

The monitor station's final reports indicated an Ork fleet moving into the system, comprising 50 Ork cruisers and over 300 escort vessels accompanying at least four space hulks. The forces of Armageddon were placed on full alert and seven Imperial cruiser squadrons, led by the Apocalypse class battleships *His Will* and *Triumph*, departed St. Jowen's Dock within twenty four hours. The Imperial fleet, under Admiral

Parol, entered battle five days later, catching the lead elements of the Ork fleet in an ambush around the high-G world of Pelucidar.

Sixty Ork attack ships were blasted out of the void by Imperial fire in the initial engagement, without the loss of a single Imperial ship. Then Parol's ships were engaged by heavy squadrons of Ork kill kroozers and swarms of fighta-bommerz racing ahead of the main body of the Ork fleet. The Imperial ships fought valiantly, their weapon batteries pounding the crude Ork vessels into scrap, ravening lance beams incinerating wave after wave of fighta-bommerz.

Nonetheless, the Ork fleet outnumbered that of Armageddon by six to one and the Imperial ships were gradually battered back. The Orks made suicidal rushes against the Imperial gun-lines with unbounded ferocity, losing a dozen of their ships in exchange for a single Imperial vessel. At the height of the engagement, Admiral Parol received comm-bursts from the Yarrick and Mannheim monitor stations warning of three more Ork fleets entering the edges of the system. Almost simultaneously, the *Triumph* was bracketed by five Ork kill kroozers and crippled by their combined heavy gunfire and massed teleport attacks. Realising that his duty lay in preserving the fleet for a protracted conflict, Admiral Parol reluctantly gave the order for a general disengagement.

The doomed monitor stations were overwhelmed a few hours later. By their last count, the combined Ork fleets numbered in excess of 2,000 ships and at least twelve space hulks, the largest number of hulks ever to assail a world of the Imperium in its 10,000 year history. Admiral Parol, his command reduced to five squadrons of cruisers and a single operational battleship, could do little more than mount hit and run attacks against the massive Ork armadas as they moved in-system. Imperial reinforcements would arrive soon, and then Parol could hope that Ghazghkull's control of space could be challenged with some hope of success.

In the meantime, Parol's escorts and light cruisers harried the Orks as best as they could, distracting and drawing off their foes into baited traps and minefields, doing whatever was in their power to reduce the tidal wave of Ork machines arriving in-system. To their dismay, the Imperial Navy ships encountered dozens of crude asteroid fortresses, or 'Roks', in the normally vulnerable tail of the Ork fleets. These heavily armed weapons platforms proved difficult to attack directly, but the very presence of such unusual numbers of them seemed to indicate some more sinister design at work.

Surprisingly, the Orks did not turn aside to capture St. Jowen's Dock. Instead they subjected it to a six day long bombardment as the Ork fleets moved past, enlivened by repeated attacks from assault boat squadrons. Ork warriors succeeded in establishing themselves throughout the lower sections of the dock, and, although the facility remained in Imperial hands, it was rendered virtually useless by damage from the bombardment and constant Ork raids. Only the arrival of two Ordo Xenos Inquisitorial kill-teams later in the campaign succeeded in driving the Orks back to the isotope storage pits at the base of the station.

On Armageddon, the final weeks before the Ork fleet's arrival were occupied with frenzied preparations. Titan Legions fired up their ancient plasma reactors and took up defensive positions around the hives, their scanner-eyes scouring the skies. Imperial Guard regiments were mustered and dug in, Space Marines from over twenty Chapters dispersed into the wastelands and mountains to prepare to face the aliens. Imperial merchant vessels daily ran the tightening gauntlet of Ork ships to rush more reinforcements to the planet. The last transport to touch down carried a legend. Commissar

Yarrick, the 'Old Man' himself, set foot on Armageddon for the first time in twenty years to the rapturous cheers of the populace.

The old commissar met with the military council that very night and advised them on Ghazghkull's most recent tactics and strategies, adding a dire warning against underestimating the Warlord's capabilities. Many said he had become old and weary, bowed down with the horrific prospect of the coming invasion. Those who knew him well could see the fierce determination that still burned in his single eye. General Kurov had always been renowned for his judgement of men in battle, and he was deeply impressed by Yarrick's drive and intelligence. He requested that Yarrick take over leadership of the military council for the duration of the current crisis and, to the relief of all, Yarrick agreed.

Six weeks after entering the Armageddon system, the vast armada of Ghazghkull's forces went into battle with the space stations and weapons platforms in high orbit over the planet. Those who had hoped that the powerful orbital defences of Armageddon would keep the Orks at bay were soon shown to be hopelessly deluded. The orbital battle raged for three days and two fiery nights, but, by dawn of the third day, the skies were filled with the vapour trails of Ork landing pods and the incandescent meteors of attack ships carving through the skies. Hades Hive, still a virtual ruin after the last war, was the first to die. In an act of terrible vengeance Ghazghkull chose not to fight again at Hades. Instead, the entire hive and its inhabitants were smashed asunder by giant asteroids dropped from orbiting space hulks. This act of wanton annihilation was but the prelude to the bloodshed which was to follow.

As the fires of Hades' destruction lit the eastern horizon, the first Ork drop legions clashed with Imperial forces near Volcanus, Acheron and Death Mire. Ground based defence lasers and missile silos took a terrible toll of the Orks as they landed, but the survivors regrouped and assailed the defences with such terrible ferocity that soon more and more of the horde was reaching the planet's surface unscathed. Feral Orks swept down from the Pallidus Mountains and out of the equatorial jungles to join the growing hordes. Where the defences proved too strong to be taken by direct assaults, huge mobs of Orks and their war machines were teleported directly into battle from the hulks above. As the ground defences fell silent on the third day of the landings, Yarrick ordered every remaining aircraft on Armageddon to be thrown into the battle in a desperate attempt to destroy as much of Ghazghkull's hordes as possible before they reached the ground.

The sulphur yellow skies over Armageddon became interwoven with twisting con-trails as thousands of Ork fighta-bommerz duelled with Imperial Thunderbolts and Furies. The Imperial craft had the advantage in that they could return to their armoured airbases to refuel and rearm, whereas the Orks had to reserve enough fuel to climb back up to their Terrorships and hulks in orbit. But soon the Orks secured ground bases and the battle turned against the brave Imperial pilots as the crushing numbers of the Orks was brought fully to bear.

As the aerial battles reached their height five days after the landings, Acheron Hive fell to the Orks without warning, captured by treachery from within. Garbled reports spoke of power grids sabotaged and the Orks boiling out from secret access tunnels at the very heart of the metropolis. The instigator of these foul crimes was soon revealed as none other than the infamous war-criminal Herman von Strab. He took over the hive as its new Overlord, announcing that it

was his divine right to rule over Armageddon. Ork brute squads stood ready to silence any dissenters who doubted von Strab's determination.

Despicably, much of the old nobility in Acheron welcomed back von Strab as a long-lost prince, choosing to genteely ignore the fact that he had thrown in his lot with some of the most dangerous aliens the galaxy had ever seen.

At Volcanus Hive, on the same day that Acheron fell, massed Ork infantry surged over the twenty square miles of defences atop Volcanus Mount just beyond the hive's outer suburbs. Seventeen garrison regiments of Armageddon Hive militia were routed and the Orks captured many weapons and fortifications intact. Volcanus itself was soon besieged, surrounded by a ring of Orkish steel and relentlessly pounded by captured macro cannon and barrage bombs.

Outside Death Mire, the war went better. The Titans of Legios Tempestor and Victorum with their supporting regiments of Skitarii virtually annihilated the Ork Blackfire tribe in a three day running battle across the Plain of Anthrand. But the Ork landers fell from the skies like a relentless storm and fighting spread across Armageddon like a forest fire, until every hive and factory complex was embroiled. In many places, Ork attacks were beaten off, but again and again the Orks would regroup and attack within hours, stretching the defenders to their limit.

As Yarrick had predicted, Ghazghkull's strategies proved deadly. The Orks kept an iron grip on Armageddon's skies, orbital bombardments and fighta-bommerz pounded Imperial forces wherever they tried to form a battleline, pinning them in place while further landings were made to surround them. Where the Orks were outnumbered, they fought a guerrilla war, striking at their foes and withdrawing into the harsh wastelands before retribution could arrive. Ghazghkull had learned the lessons of Chigon 17 well, and deliberately prepared his plans so that the fighting was scattered and chaotic; precisely the conditions in which Ork warbands thrive and Imperial regiments were denied the support and coordination they needed to fight back effectively. The only force which consistently defeated the Orks was the Adeptus Astartes and the Space Marines tirelessly scoured the hinterlands of Armageddon on search and destroy missions to eliminate the greenskins at any opportunity.

As the battles raged on the planet, Ghazghkull unleashed another of his carefully prepared surprises. Incredibly, dozens of the great asteroid fortresses encountered by Admiral Parol's ships began to descend from orbit. Slowed by powerful force fields, rockets and modified traktor kannon, the Ork Roks made landings in the verdant equatorial jungles and across Armageddon Primus and Secundus. Many were lost to ground fire or accidents but each one that survived became a bastion for the Orks, a rallying point and a ready-made fortress.

As well as their huge guns and missile batteries, the Roks contained giant teleport arrays like those first used by Ghazghkull in his Piscina campaign. These were employed to teleport down Ork reinforcements, including Gargants and heavy artillery, in an endless stream. Commissar Yarrick personally led attacks by Cadian shock troops supported by the Titans of Legio Metallica and Legio Ignatum which destroyed several of the fortresses, but bloody battles around many others consumed whole regiments in hours. For the rest of the war, the Space Marines bore the brunt of eliminating the Ork fortresses where they could, the Salamanders Chapter winning particular acclaim for their successes against fortresses along Hemlock River.



Mysteriously, the Orks also made landings in the Fire Wastes and Dead Lands to the north and south of the main continent of Armageddon. Even Yarrick was surprised; these grim, forbidding lands had always been believed to be uninhabitable and utterly valueless. Their value to Ghazghkull became apparent when weeks later hundreds of tanker-sized Ork submersibles rose from the polluted waters and made landings at Tempestora and Helsreach. Surprise was total, Tempestora fell within days and the dockyards of Helsreach were soon captured. Only a bitter defence by the Helsreach Hive gang militias, with supporting companies of Stormtroopers and Space Marines which had been rushed to the area, prevented the Orks overrunning the entire hive.

Fourteen days after the initial Ork landings, the first major confrontation between Ork and Imperial war engines occurred. A ten day battle raged over the Diabolus factory complex as the Gargant mobs of Warlord Burzuruk and Warlord Skarfang clashed with the Titans of Legio Crucius. Six Titans and eight Gargants were utterly destroyed in the fighting and many others needed months of repairs before they could fight again. The Diabolus complex was wrecked during the battle, its foundries and machine shops blasted apart or crushed underfoot by giant fighting machines. In the aftermath of the battle, Ork Speed Kults swiftly encircled Infernus Hive, cutting it off from all outside help. Mechanised counter-attacks into the ash wastes met with initial success, but when an entire regiment of Savlar Chem Dogs was surrounded and wiped out by the Speed Freeks, further attempts to break out were abandoned by those inside.

As the beleaguered defenders pondered how to lift the siege, reports came in of a vast Ork horde rounding the Pallidus Mountains from the north-east. Soon the horde was visible from the hive spire, a great sea of warriors which seemed to

fill the empty expanse of the ash wastes to overflowing. Towering Gargants strode through the tide, like great ships rolling on a green sea. The guttural war chants of the Orks could be heard from over twenty miles away, the ground shaking with their progress. Worst of all, the countless bannerpoles swaying over the horde bore the personal glyph of the mighty Ghazghkull himself.

As the skies darkened beneath the shadow of Ork hulks high above and the first orbital bombardments crashed down, the citizens of Infernus knew that their doom was upon them. They made what preparations they could with preternatural calm, commending their souls to the Emperor as they built barricades or distributed weapons and ammunition to the troops. They tried to take inspiration from the legends of Commissar Yarrick and how he made the Orks pay for every inch of ground at Hades Hive. Not all were brave enough to face their doom, thousands fled into the wastes to be killed or captured by Speed Kults which circled the hive like vultures over a carcass.

The Adeptus Arbites soon moved to secure the hive, turning back or executing any who failed in their duty to the Emperor. As Ghazghkull's horde came within range, the last great siege guns of Infernus pounded at them, lobbing thousand-pound shells into the mass of greenskins until return fire from the orbiting hulks smashed them apart. In the brief lull that followed, Ghazghkull delivered to the defenders of Infernus a messenger. It was Colonel Gortar of the Chem Dogs, horribly mutilated, and missing his eyes and hands. The message the Colonel bore was a simple one which would be heard many times across Armageddon in the months to come:

"Surrender or die!"

WARZONE ARMAGEDDON

'We hold them here or we fight them on the ballowed ground of Terra itself. I for one would rather see a million human lives lost here than allow a single Ork to set foot on Earth.'

General Pavlov, Armageddon Command Guard.

The scale of the war on Armageddon is difficult to imagine. Millions lost their lives, mighty war-machines clashed, mile high hivecities were razed to the ground and deeds both heroic and villainous were performed. The Imperium has committed troops from hundreds of lightyears around the Armageddon sector in response to one of the largest Ork invasions in its ten thousand year history.

The war involved millions of Imperial troops. At least twenty-three chapters of the Adeptus Astartes were on Armageddon at the height of the war, and most suffered serious losses. The Celestial Lions were all but obliterated, and the Blood Angels lost one of their mightiest heroes when Captain Tycho fell taking the breach at the siege of Hive Tempestora.

Imperial logisticians can only estimate how many Imperial Guard took part in the war. It is known that twenty-four regiments were originally called upon to serve, but the Armageddon Command Guard have long since lost track of the number of men involved, and the numbers of casualties suffered amongst them.

The Orks too sustained enormous losses, although these only served to spur the invasion onwards. Towards the end of the first phase of the war, the Imperial Navy regained control of orbital space, stemming the tide of Orks landing on Armageddon. However, due to the Orks' unique reproductive cycle, the race is fated to occupy the planet for the foreseeable future.

After many months of incessant warfare, an uneasy stalemate was reached in most theatres, neither army able to gain significant advantage over the other. As the Season of Fire

approached, both sides attempted to consolidate their positions in order to weather the storms ahead. When the Season of Fire comes to Armageddon, fighting is the last thing on the mind of anyone caught in the open; even an Ork must look first to find shelter. The worst of the superheated ash-storms will kill an unprotected man in minutes, and foul the engines and tracks of any armoured vehicle.

As the first searing winds rose across the Fire Wastes and swept down through Tempestora and Death Mire, the Imperial troops stationed along hundred mile long trench lines began to dig in. Vast shelters were constructed along all fronts, fortified with heavy bunkers. The Orks, being of stronger constitution than their human enemy did not need to construct such heavy shelters, but even they were forced to dig in and seek a modicum of protection against the worst of the searing ash-storms.

The troops stationed along the enormous trench lines bore the very worst nature could throw at them. Many spent long months in cramped, poorly filtered shelters, the monotony only relieved during lulls in the storms when they would be ordered to make patrols and sorties across a hellish war-scape. Visibility was seldom greater than three metres and death was as likely to come at the hands of the weather as from enemy infiltrators.

Along the Tempestor Victorum trench line, the Imperial Guard defenders of Death Mire were forced to request assistance from the Space Marines of the Storm Lords chapter during an Ork assault consisting of dreadnoughts and killer kans. The Space Marines were only able to fight outside of their Land Raiders and Rhinos for a few minutes at a time, and the guardsmen could only watch from their fortified shelters as the battle raged in the searing storm outside. Eventually the Orks were repulsed, and when the storm finally abated three days later some fifty Ork machines were discovered standing motionless in the wastes, the ash having clogged their engines and joints until they simply ground to



a halt. Following this incident the Armageddon Command Guard requested the Storm Lords take permanent station along the siege lines of Death Mire. The Storm Lords commander's reply was not suitable for official records, but illustrated the pride a Space Marine takes in aggressive, rather than defensive, battlefield role.

The onset of the storms caused an increase in the fighting surrounding the cities, as forces attempted to consolidate their positions and gain the relative protection of the hives. The war spilled over the city walls and vicious cityfighting erupted, engulfing every square mile of every contested hive. Amidst this fighting hundreds of provisional companies were formed, consisting of hive-gangers, house-guards and just ordinary civilians defending their homes.

Hive Hades was destroyed in the opening phases of the war when Ghazghkull ordered captured asteroids dropped from orbit. The impacts reduced much of the city to an enormous crater, and the outlying areas to ruins. Amidst these ruins, a brutal war was being fought for control of the scant shelter offered from the excesses of the Season of Fire.

The largest threat caused by the storms came from Orks seeking shelter amidst the jungle. The Imperial forces stationed in the jungle region were already sorely pressed, with their headquarters at Cerbera Base under constant siege from the surrounding hordes of Feral Orks. With the influx of Orks to the area came an increase in the reports of unexplained phenomena around the Angron's Monolith and Ancient Pyramid sectors. The Relictors Space Marines spent the entire season fighting in the vicinity of the Monolith, while the Kill-teams of the Ordo Xenos saw almost constant action near the pyramid. No official reports regarding the activities of either group have been logged.

Both sides took the opportunity to bring in fresh troops during the lull in the fighting. Orbital space is the only theatre truly dominated by the Imperium, and so the task of bringing in reinforcements has been far easier for them than for the Orks. The casualties sustained on Armageddon have stretched many Imperial forces to breaking point, and many regiments have been amalgamated with others to maintain cohesive formations. Other groups have departed, as in the case of the Blood Angels Space Marines returning to Baal bearing the body of their fallen hero Captain Tycho.

The Armageddon Command Guard has requested, and been granted the aid of a clan of the infamous Skull Takers of Canak IV. This force is drawn from the natives of a night-shrouded deathworld known for its unstable volcanoes and choking ash clouds. The services of the clan have been invaluable in the depths of the Ash Wastes, where their unique skills have allowed them to raid into remote areas assumed by the Orks to be safe.

The Imperium has now cast its net wider than ever before in order to import fresh troops. A general call to arms has gone out, and planets as distant as Valhalla and Necromunda have answered. Those worlds closer to the war have been required to raise troops far in excess of their traditional obligations, and there is no end in sight to the largest muster in the region since the Age of Apostasy.

Finally, after months of blinding storms, the Season of Fire is drawing to a close and the cooler Season of Shadows is looming. Battle lines are once again being drawn and it is only a matter of time before the full destructive potential of both sides is once again brought to bear. Armageddon has become a world doomed to endless war. The Imperium simply will not relinquish its control of the world, as to do so would allow the endless tide of Orks to scatter before the Imperial military, to be washed up who knows where. Better



that the tide is held back at Armageddon than allowed to dissipate and reform elsewhere, perhaps even closer to sacred Terra than Armageddon. The cost of this endeavour is measured in human lives; and those lives are numbered in the millions.

For the Orks, Armageddon has become the ultimate testing ground, a warlord's playground where hundreds of thousands of boyz can be sent to their deaths in the name of Gork and Mork. Thanks to their unique reproductive cycle, and the fact that word of Armageddon has travelled to the most distant Ork empires, the Orks have a limitless supply of reinforcements with which to fight the Imperial defenders. Ghazghkull believed he had unleashed the Ragna-ork: the final confrontation in which the Ork race will rise as one and crush or enslave every race that stands before it. Only time will tell if Ghazghkull's departure will see another warlord rise and lead the Orks on towards the ultimate goal of Waaagh! Ghazghkull: the throne of the Imperium itself, Earth.

'We's stomped 'umies, we's blown up stuff and we's driven our traks from one end of da world to da uvva. We's gonna come back next year!'

Bugsplatta Defnik of the Red Wheelz Speed Freeks.

FORCE DISPOSITIONS AFTER THE FIRST SEASON OF FIRE

IMPERIAL GUARD

1st Div, ARCADIAN RIFLES	6 Regiments
ARM. ASH WASTE MILITIA	13 Regiments
ARM. COMMAND GUARD	5 Companies
ARM HIVE MILITIA	280 Regiments
ARM. ORK HUNTERS	11 Regiments
ARM. STEEL LEGION	56 Regiments
ARPHISTA PENAL LEGION	1 Demi-Legion
ASGARDIAN RANGERS	2 Regiments
CADIAN SHOCK TROOPS	19 Regiments
CANAK IV 'SKULL TAKERS'	1 Clan
CATACHAN JUNGLE TROOPS	3 Regiments
CITYFIGHTING PROVISIONAL COMPANIES.....	Est. 600 Companies
DEATH KORPS OF KRIEG	5 Regiments
ELYSIAN DROP TROOPS	12 Regiments
JOPALL INDENTURED SQDNS.....	12 Regiments
MINERVAN TANK LEGIONS.....	3 Legions
MONGLOR OGRYN AUXILIA	1 Regiments
MORDIAN IRON GUARD	8 Regiments
8th NECROMUNDAN 'SPIDERS'	3 Battalions
NOCTAN STRIKE FORCES.....	5 Regiments
NORDIAN BERZERKERS.....	4 Regiments
OACANON PHALANX TROOPS	8 Regiments
PYRAN DRAGOONS.....	8 Regiments
POLAX 41ST 'SHOCK'	1 Regiment
SAVLAR CHEM-DOGS	6 Regiments
SAVLAR CHEM-RIDERS	2 Regiments
SEBASTIN DEFENDERS.....	15 Regiments
SEMTEXIAN BOMBARDIERS.....	9 Batteries
STORM TROOPERS	18 Companies
TERRAN PRAEFECTS	10 Regiments
INQUISITORIAL INDUCTED COMPANIES	3 Companies
VALHALLAN ICE WARRIORS	8 Regiments
ZOUVAN SKIRMISHERS.....	3 Brigades
VORGARN LIGHT INFANTRY	12 Regiments
XENONIAN FREE COMPANIES	5 Companies

DEPARTAMENTO MUNITORUM

ENGINEER CORPS.....	5
PIONEER CORPS	2

ADEPTUS ARBITES

PRECINCTS.....	16
PUNITIVE BATTALIONS.....	41

OFFICIO ASSASSINORUM

AGENTS.....	CLASSIFIED INFORMATION
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OFFICIO SABATORUM

AGENTS	21
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ORDO XENOS

KILL-TEAMS	3
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TEMPLARS PSYKOLOGIS

DISRUPTION SQUADS	20
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LEGIONES ASTARTES

ANGELS OF FIRE.....	2 Companies
ANGELS OF VIGILANCE	1 Company
ANGELS PORPHYR	3 Companies
BLACK DRAGONS	2 Companies
CELESTIAL LIONS.....	> 1 Company
EXORCISTS	1 Company
FLESH TEARERS.....	4 Companies
HOWLING GRIFFONS.....	2 Companies
IMMORTAL HEARTS.....	1 Company
IRON KNIGHTS	1 Company
MARINES MALEVOLENT	2 Companies
MINOTAURS	1 Company
MORTIFACTORS.....	2 Companies
RAPTORS	2 Companies
RED SCORPIONS	1 Company
RELICTORS.....	10 Companies
SALAMANDERS	2 Companies
STORM GIANTS	2 Companies
SUBJUGATORS	1 Company
WHITE SCARS	1 Brotherhood
WIDOWMAKERS	1 Company

ADEPTA SORORITAS

ORDER OF OUR MARTYRED LADY.....	1 Commandery
ORDER OF THE ARGENT SHROUD	1 Preceptory
ORDER OF THE EBON CHALICE	1 Commandery
ORDER OF THE BLOODY ROSE.....	1 Commandery
LESSER ORDER OF THE WOUNDED HEART.....	1 Commandery

ADEPTUS MECHANICUS

CENTURIO ORDINATUS	4 Ordinatus
LEGIO CRUCIUS	Demi-Legio
LEGIO IGNATUM.....	> Quattro-Legio
LEGIO INVIGILATA	Legio
LEGIO MAGNA.....	Quattro-Legio
LEGIO METALICA	Demi-Legio
LEGIO TEMPESTOR.....	Legio
LEGIO VICTORUM.....	Legio
SKITARII	14 Regiments

IMPERIAL FLEET

GLORIOUS AGE.....	Retribution class battleship
TRIUMPH	Apocalypse class battleship
INOMINE VERITAS	Emperor class battleship
GREEN LAKE	Oberon class battleship
FIRST-LINE CRUISER SQUADRONS	6
SECOND-LINE CRUISER SQUADRONS.....	9
LIGHT CRUISER SQUADRONS.....	17
ESCORT SQUADRONS.....	21
BOMBER STRIKE WINGS	54
INTERCEPTOR STRIKE WINGS.....	81
SPACE MARINE BATTLEBARGES	8
SPACE MARINE STRIKE CRUISERS	38
THUNDERHAWK GUNSHIPS.....	numbers unknown

ARMAGEDDON PRIME

FORCES OF THE GREAT DESPOT OF DREGRUK

DESPOT GAZGRIM'S
WAR HORDE.....Estimated 200 warbands, 15 Gargants
WARLORD THOGFANG'S
GARGANT BIG MOBEstimated 3 warbands, 2 Gargants
WARLORD BADFANG'S
BATTLE FORTSEstimated 2 warbands, 12 Battle Fortresses

BLACK SLAYERS TRIBE.....Estimated 30 warbands, 4 Gargants
FIREBELLIES TRIBEEstimated 15 warbands, 3 Gargants
VARGA'S DROP LEGIONEstimated 5 warbands
WARLORD GARSHAG'S
BIG GUNZ.....Estimated 7 'artillery' warbands

ARMAGEDDON SECONDUS

FORCES OF THE ORK WARLORD GHAZGHKULL MAG URUK THRAGA

GREAT OVERLORD GHAZGHKULL'S WAR HORDE
Remnants joined other warbands after Ghazghkull's departure.
WARLORD MORFANG'S
GARGANT BIG MOBEstimated 160 warbands, 15 Gargants
WARLORD SKARFANG'S
GARGANT BIG MOBEstimated 6 warbands, 7 Gargants
WARLORD BURZURUK'S
GARGANT BIG MOBEstimated 6 warbands, 7 Gargants
WARLORD KROKSNIK'S
DETH TRAKSEstimated 3 warbands, 15 Battle Fortresses
BLACKSKULL TRIBE.....Estimated 32 warbands, 5 Gargants

CROOKED MOON TRIBEEstimated 19 warbands, 3 Gargants
RED FIN TRIBEEstimated 30 warbands, 5 Gargants
RED WHEELZ
SPEED FREEKS.....Estimated 18 'Speed Kult' warbands
BURNING DEATH
SPEED FREEKS.....Estimated 2 'Speed Kult' warbands
WARLORD THUGSNIK'S
BIG GUNZ.....Estimated 6 'artillery' warbands
WARLORD MORBAD'S
BIG GUNZ.....Estimated 12 'artillery' warbands

THE FIRE WASTES

FORCES OF URGOK THE UNSTOPPABLE

GREAT SLAYER GRIMSKUL'S
WAR HORDE.....Estimated 60 warbands, 6 Gargants
WARLORD BLAGROT'S
GARGANT BIG MOBEstimated 4 warbands, 3 Gargants
WARLORD SKRAG'S
GARGANT BIG MOBEstimated 1 warbands, 1 Gargants

VULTURES TRIBE.....Estimated 8 warbands, 1 Gargant
STOMPERS TRIBE.....Estimated 4 warbands, 1 Gargant
SLASHERZ SPEED FREEKZEstimated 12 'Speed Kult' warbands

THE DEAD LANDS

FORCES OF OVER-FIEND OF OCTARIUS

GREAT FIEND GORSNIK MAGASH'S
WAR HORDEEstimated 350 warbands, 159 Battle Fortresses
WARLORD SKABSNIK'S
BLITZ BRIGADE.....Estimated 6 warbands, 8 Battle Fortresses

BLACK CLOUD
SPEED FREEKZ.....Estimated 45 'Speed Kult' warbands
WHITE LIGHTNING
SPEED FREEKS.....Estimated 38 'Speed Kult' warbands

ORBITAL SUPPORT

Ork space hulks.....4+
Fighta-Bommer squadrons.....1,500-2,000
Ork attack craft.....1,800+

Ork roks.....30+
Ork Kroozers200-300



5.1 SPACE MARINES

"Life is not measured in years, but in the deeds of men."

The Legions of Adeptus Astartes are more commonly known as the Space Marines – the most powerful and the most dreaded of all human warriors. In some respects they are not really human at all but superhuman – superior in almost every way to an ordinary man.

Compared to humanity's teeming billions, there are very few Space Marines indeed. They are far too few to form the sole fighting forces of the Imperium. The Space Marines are the Imperium's elite fighting troops, a core of highly mobile shock troops trained to fight on land and in space. On the battlefield they are expected to take part in the most dangerous and important attacks, and to hold their positions no matter how hopeless the situation.

Space Marines are entrusted with all sorts of dangerous missions, such as lightning raids behind enemy lines, infiltration attacks to capture vital positions, and tunnel fights in enemy-held cities. They also undertake long voyages of planetary exploration and conquest on behalf of the Imperium, ear-marking planets which are too well defended so that they can be attacked later with the support of the Imperial Guard.

Chapters

Space Marines are organised into small independent armies called Chapters. Each Chapter has its own ships, its own uniforms, and its own distinct identity and traditions. Most Chapters operate from a world owned by the Chapter, known as the Chapter Planet. Chapter Planets are part of the Imperium, but they are ruled by the Space Marine Chapter that has its base there. Some Chapters are not based on a planet at all: their base of operations can be a vast space fleet, an orbital asteroid, or a giant space station.



All the Space Marines in a Chapter belong to its warrior cult. In many cases, the warrior cults of the Space Marines preserve traditions and practices older even than the accepted ritual of the Ecclesiarchy. The details of these practices are rumoured to be barbaric and darkly sinister. Space Marines belonging to a Chapter are therefore spiritual brothers as well as brothers at arms. This dual role as physical and spiritual warriors is very important, and it is what makes the Space Marines such dedicated warriors.



Origins

The Space Marines were created at the very dawn of Imperial history, ten thousand years before the present day. Some Chapters can trace their history back to that time. These are the Chapters of the First Founding, created by the scientists of the Emperor to take part in the Great Crusade. Since that time many other Space Marine Chapters have been created, the most recent being those of the Twenty-Sixth Founding.



The First Founding

Originally there were only twenty Chapters. Many of these Chapters took part in the rebellion known as the Horus Heresy and were subsequently destroyed or exiled. Those that rebelled during the Horus Heresy and are no longer part of the Imperial Forces (some have survived as Chaos Renegades in the infernal regions of the Eye of Terror). The names and histories of Chapters 2 and 11 were deleted from Imperial records following the Horus Heresy. The name of Chapter 16, the Lunar Wolves, was changed to Sons of Horus prior to the Horus Heresy, and subsequently to the Black Legion, under which name it now serves the forces of Chaos.



Chapter Organisation

There are approximately a thousand chapters of Space Marines at the current time. The Chapters are distributed fairly evenly throughout the galaxy, some outside the confines of the Imperium, most concentrated around areas occupied by Orks or other dangerous races. At any one time approximately half the Space Marine chapters are engaged on exploratory missions, seeking out new worlds to conquer and and hounding hostile aliens to extinction.

Most Space Marine Chapters are organised using the rules laid down in a set of guidelines call the Codex Astartes. This book was written many thousands of years ago, and states that a Space Marine Chapter should consist of ten companies each of one hundred Space Marines. A company consists of ten squads each of ten men including a Sergeant. In addition to this basic fighting strength, each company has its own Captain, Standard Bearer, Chaplain and Apothecary.

A Chapter also includes a number of officers and specialists who stand aside from the company organisation. These individuals are known as the headquarters staff and they may be assigned to fight with a company in battle. Included amongst them are psychic Librarians from the Chapter's Librarius and Techmarines together with their Servitors.

The Master of each Space Marine Chapter is its leader and spiritual head. A Space Marine Master not only leads his troops in battle, but he also has to act as the figurehead for the whole Chapter. As some Chapters rule entire planets, a Space Marine Master may act as the head of government as well – effectively as the Imperial Commander of a whole planet.

A Space Marine Chapter includes a substantial organisation designed to provide everything needed by the Space Marine fighting units. This includes armouries and weapon shops, space fleet and vehicle construction and maintenance sites, research laboratories, information repositories, communication offices and cult chapels. These organisations employ many more individuals than the fighting units, but only a small proportion are actually Space Marines. The majority are hereditary slaves of the Chapter. These slaves are born to serve the Chapter. They are well treated, receive a fine education, and fulfil a vital role within the Chapter. Slaves regard themselves as part of the Chapter, and their loyalty is beyond doubt.

Although the Codex describes a number of ranks and responsibilities within the headquarters staff, only a very few of these officers actually accompany the Chapter to war. Many are non-combatants of advanced years whose roles are to find and train recruits or administrate the Chapter. Some ranks described by the Codex include the Chapter's Ancient (or Standard Bearer), the Master's Secretarius, the Lord of the Household, the Chapter's Armourer, the Commander of the Fleet, Victuallers, the Commander of the Arsenal, Commander of Recruits and Commander of the Watch.

There are relatively few of these senior officers as most non-combatant roles within the Chapter are performed by the Chapter's human serfs. The two largest groups are the Librarians and the Techmarines. Consequently, these two are set aside from the other headquarters staff and considered separately.

Each of the ten companies that comprises a Chapter is led by a Space Marine Captain and includes supernumeraries such as the Company's Chaplain and Apothecary. The fighting strength of each company is made up of ten squads each of ten Space Marines led by a Sergeant.

Of the ten companies comprising a Chapter, the 1st Company consists of veteran troops and is invariably the most powerful. The 1st Company is the only one able to use the rare and treasured Terminator armour.

All of the companies except the Scout company maintain Rhino transports for each of their squads and officers. The 1st Company also has a permanent establishment of Land Raiders for carrying Terminator squads. It is also customary for Dreadnoughts to remain a part of their company and their presence certainly bolsters the company's fighting strength.

The 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th are Battle companies, each consisting of six squads of tactical Space Marines, two of assault, and two of Devastators. These four Battle companies form the main battle lines and generally bear the brunt of the fighting. The Assault squads of the Battle company may be deployed as bike squadrons or land speeder crews.

Companies 6 and 7 are Tactical companies, each consisting of ten Tactical squads. These are intended to act as a reserve which may be used to bolster the main line, launch diversionary attacks, or stem enemy flanking moves. Company 6 is also trained to use the Space Marine bike and the entire company may be deployed as bike squadrons. Similarly, Company 7 squads are trained to fight with land speeders and the company acts as a light vehicle reserve formation.

The 8th Company is an Assault company consisting of ten Assault squads. This is the most mobile company and is often equipped with jump packs, bikes and land speeders. The 8th Company is used in the assault role and wherever a strong hand-to-hand fighting force is needed.

The 9th Company is a Devastator company, consisting of ten Devastator squads. It is the most powerfully equipped company in the Chapter and is used to bolster defence points and provide long range support.

The Chapter's 10th Company is its Scout company consisting of a number of Scout squads. Scouts are youths who have been recruited and partially transformed into Space Marines. Until their physical transformation and training is complete

they fight as Scouts. There is no formal size for a Scout company as the rate of recruitment is not fixed.

Although most Chapters follow the guidelines in the Codex Astartes, this is not true of every single one. Some Chapters have a completely different Chapter organisation, such as the Great Companies used by the Space Wolves, while many others include unique formations and companies that are not described in the Codex Astartes such as the Ravenwing of the Dark Angels Chapter or the Death Company of the Blood Angels. The majority of Chapters, though, follow the teachings of the Codex Astartes and treat its words as holy writ that should be followed as closely as possible.

SPECIAL RULE

5.1.1 They Shall Know No Fear

Space Marines are renowned for their tenacity and bravery. This is represented by the following rules:

- *It takes two Blast markers to suppress a Space Marine unit or kill a unit in a broken formation (ignore any left over Blast markers).*
- *Space Marine formations are only broken if they have two Blast markers per unit in the formation.*
- *Halve the number of extra hits suffered by a Space Marine formation that loses an assault, rounding down in favour of the Space Marines.*
- *When a broken Space Marine formation rallies then it receives a number of Blast markers equal to the number of units, rather than half this number.*



SPACE MARINE CHAPTER ORGANISATION

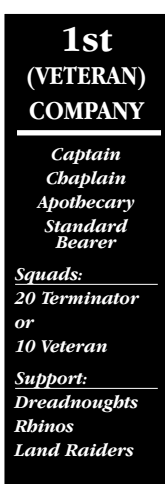


HEADQUARTERS STAFF

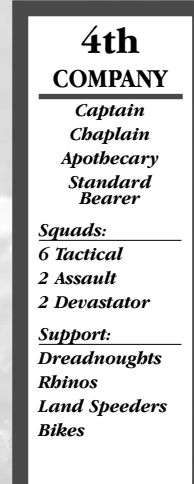
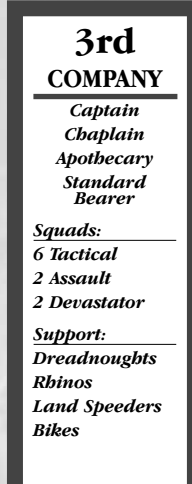
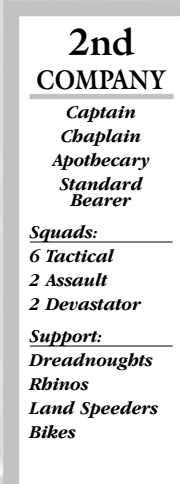
*Master of the Chapter
Senior officers
Administrative staff
Support personnel*



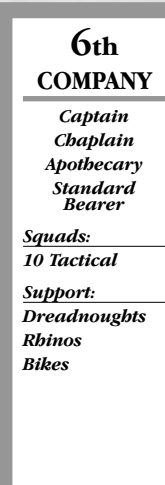
VETERANS



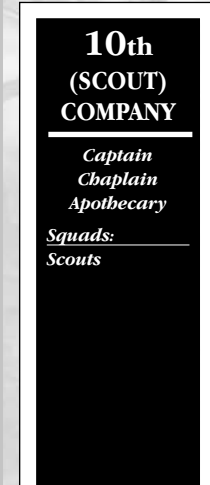
BATTLE COMPANIES



RESERVE COMPANIES



SCOUTS



Note: The coloured borders around the various company boxes denote the company colours which are repeated on the Space Marines' armour and banners. In addition to the vehicles and war machines listed, the Chapter has access to a vast range of other military hardware. This includes entire companies of Land Raiders, Predators and the like as well as special artillery and weaponry. Individual armoured vehicles and support gear are supplied to the companies, in appropriate livery, by command of the various captains.

5.1.2 SPACE MARINE UNITS

The following section describes all of the different units used by the Space Marines, and provides all of the information you will need to use them in your games of Epic. Space Marine armies have a strategy rating of 5, and all Space Marine formations have an initiative rating of 1+ and use the 'They Shall Know No Fear' special rule.

The Space Marines of the Adeptus Astartes are an accurate, decisive fighting force. Each Space Marine represents the pinnacle of human genetic engineering. Their bodies are enhanced by various implants, making their senses far better than a normal man's. This physical superiority is combined with extensive indoctrination and hypnotic therapy, ensuring each Space Marine is unswervingly loyal to his Chapter and the Emperor. Space Marines literally know no fear and when even the bravest human would run in terror, they will continue fighting at the forefront, blasting their foes with their rapid-firing boltguns.

Although exceptional warriors, Space Marines are comparatively few in number – each Chapter operates with around a thousand warriors at one time, and there are only about one thousand Chapters to help defend the whole of the Imperium. However, what the Space Marines may lack in numbers they more than make up for in bravery and skill. They fight with surgical precision, using their swift Rhinos and Thunderhawks to strike at the heart of the enemy, eradicating their high command and capturing vital installations. They are also excellent terror troops – the mere threat of a Space Marine assault has quelled rebellions in the past and few can withstand the fury of their attack. The Space Marines tanks and armoured fighting vehicles are geared towards this role also, with the rapid Predator and hulking Land Raider battle tanks making up the bulk of their armoured columns. Even their artillery, the Whirlwind, is rapid-moving, laying down a cover of supporting fire for the advancing Space Marines. As well as being terrifying shock troops, Space Marines excel in defensive situations too. Their heavy armour and special training allows them to withstand attack after attack against seemingly overwhelming odds, coming out at the end battered but victorious.



SPACE MARINE COMMANDER

The Commanders of the mighty Adeptus Astartes are numbered amongst the greatest warriors in the service of the Emperor, veterans of countless wars and resolute beyond measure. How leaders are chosen from within the ranks varies from

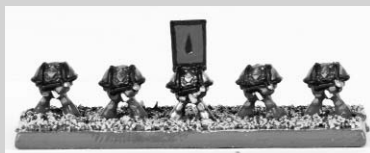
Chapter to Chapter as does their combat doctrine. The one

constant is the ability for any Space Marine Commander, whether they are Chaplain, Captain or Librarian to forge the efforts of several squads into a single battle plan. A squad of Space Marines on their own is a force to be reckoned with, but when combined with other squads as part of an integrated plan they are virtually unstoppable. Renowned for their tenacity of purpose and iron will, Space Marine Commanders will inspire their brothers to press home an assault even after sustaining casualties that would have lesser troops fleeing in terror.

SPACE MARINE COMMANDER

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Character	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Power Weapon	(base contact)	Assault Weapons	Macro-weapon, Extra Attack (+1)	
Smite	(15cms)	Small Arms	Macro-weapon, Extra Attack (+1)	

Notes: Space Marine Commanders can be one of four types: Captains, Librarians, Chaplains, or Supreme Commanders. All are *Characters* and have an *Invulnerable Save* and the *Leader* abilities. Captains also have the *Commander* special ability. Librarians have a *Smite* attack (listed in the weapon section above). Chaplains are *Inspiring*. Supreme Commanders have the *Supreme Commander* ability.



SPACE MARINE TERMINATORS

Terminators are heavily armed and equipped with immensely strong Terminator armour. The knowledge of how to produce Tactical Dreadnought or Terminator armour is long lost to the Imperium, its origins a jealously guarded secret of the Adeptus

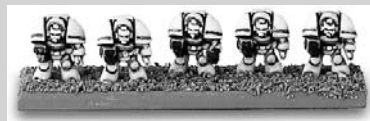
Mechanicus. Most Adeptus Astartes Chapters maintain a

precious few full suits, each maintained with almost sacred reverence by the Chapter's Tech Priests. Terminator armour is only granted to the Chapter's finest warriors and commanders, each suit bearing the mark of those that have fallen before them. Encased in layered ceramite armour and powerful servo systems, a Terminator Marine can withstand a direct hit from all bar the most powerful of weapons whilst delivering a brutal attack from the suit's augmented combat systems. Out of all of the elite Space Marines, it is the power and skill of those wearing Terminator armour that is most feared by the enemies of the Imperium.

SPACE MARINE TERMINATORS

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Infantry	15cm	4+	3+	3+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Storm Bolters	(15cms)	Small Arms	—	
2 x Assault Cannon	30 cm	AP5+/AT5+	—	
Power Weapons	(base contact)	Assault Weapons	Macro-weapon, Extra Attack (+1)-	

Notes: Reinforced Armour, Teleport, Thick Rear Armour.



SPACE MARINE TACTICAL SQUAD

Tactical squads make up the bulk of Space Marine forces on Armageddon and are at the heart of virtually all special operations staged during Ghazghkull's invasion. Equipped to serve a flexible battlefield role, they were often tasked with the hardest of all objectives to either assault or secure. Such was the fate of the Celestial Lions who were given the job of destroying the Gargant construction yards at Mannheim Gap. Tactical Squads from four Companies led the assault in Rhino transports only to discover the Gargants there were already fully operational. Massively outgunned the Celestial Lions

heroically engaged the Gargants, but lacking the firepower needed to penetrate their power fields were eventually surrounded and destroyed. Although a grievous loss to the Imperial forces on Armageddon, Tactical squads still fight at the centre of Space Marine operations in the Armageddon sector, winning back ground in lightning hit and run raids that suit the highly mobile nature of the Adeptus Astartes.



SPACE MARINE TACTICAL

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Infantry	15cm	4+	4+	4+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Bolters	(15cms)	Small Arms	—	
Missile Launcher	45cm	AP5+/AT6+	—	



SPACE MARINE ASSAULT SQUAD

Assault squads are equipped with jump packs and close combat weapons. Known for their martial savagery, the Blood Angels played a prominent part in the Armageddon conflict under the leadership of Commander Dante. In particular, several of the Blood Angels assault squads reputedly retook the factory district and censorium at Hive Infernus from Ghazghkull's forces after a protracted and particularly bloody firefight against some of Ghazaghkull's own elite Nobz. Led by Dante himself and his Honour Guard, several Blood Angels assault squads stormed the complex in a bold aerial drop from Thunderhawk

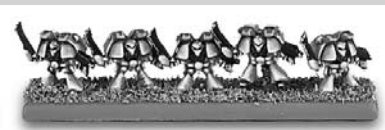
Gunships taking the Orks completely by surprise. After securing the factory complex, Dante's force used their jump packs to literally leap from one building to another, effectively bypassing the entrenched Ork positions at street level. Using their speed and mobility to outflank the Orks, Dante's Assault Marines captured the factory complex and demonstrated precisely why the Assault squads of the Adeptus Astartes are rightly feared and respected.



SPACE MARINE ASSAULT

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Infantry	30cm	4+	3+	5+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Bolt Pistols	(15cms)	Small Arms	—	
Chainswords	(base contact)	Assault weapon	—	

Notes: *Jump Packs*



SPACE MARINE DEVASTATOR SQUAD

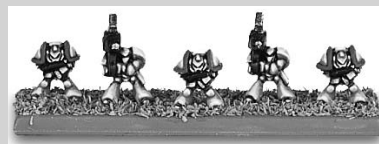
Space Marine Devastator squads are equipped with additional heavy weapons and are used to provide support for Assault and Tactical squads. During the first days of Ghazghkull's assault several key communication and astropath facilities were overrun by the Orks. Realising that they would become isolated by the Orks advance, a task force from the Salamanders Chapter of Space Marines chose instead to make a stand at the Pyrian Deep promethium refinery. From positions high on the refineries' cooling towers, several Devastator squads engaged the advancing Orks at long range crippling over a dozen

armoured vehicles in the first salvo alone. Forced to mount an assault on the refinery, the Orks counter-attacked over a period of three days, but each time were driven away from the complex by the combined firepower of the Devastators. Eventually, the refinery fell to heavy siege guns brought up from the assault on Infernus Hive, but not before the Salamanders had inflicted significant losses on Ghazghkull's forces.



SPACE MARINE DEVASTATOR

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Infantry	15cm	4+	5+	3+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
2 x Missile Launcher	45cm	AP5+/AT6+	—	





SPACE MARINE SCOUTS

In most Space Marine Chapters, Scouts are initiates, not yet fully in combat and yet to earn their place amongst their veteran power armoured brothers. Deployed ahead of the main force, Scouts are the Chapter's eyes and ears, able to infiltrate enemy positions or disrupt vital supply lines. They are usually lightly armed with close range weapons. The constant breaching of Ork lines

laying siege to Hive Tartarus was widely attributed to Space Marine Scout elements of the Angels Porphy Chapter. Their hit and run attacks opened up a front allowing vital supplies to reach General Kurov's besieged Imperial Guard forces within. Scout squads also saw action as part of the successful South Primus Front where their skills in infiltration were used to hunt out surviving pockets of the Orks Blackfire tribe. Aided by Titans from Legio Tempestor and Legio Victorium, the Orks were driven back into the equatorial jungles east of Anthrand pursued by scouts from the Space Wolves Chapter.

SPACE MARINE SCOUTS

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Infantry	15cm	5+	4+	5+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Shotguns	(15cms)	Small Arms	—	
Heavy bolter	30cm	AP5+	—	

Notes: Scouts, Infiltrators



SPACE MARINE DREADNOUGHT

When a Space Marine falls in combat, the loss is sorely felt within the Chapter, such is the bond between brother Marines. Not all fatally wounded Space Marines are destined to die however; those whose bodies are shattered beyond repair may yet

fight on within the sarcophagus of a Space Marine Dreadnought. For a Space Marine this is a great honour, and one only bestowed upon the Chapter's finest warriors after centuries of service. Sustained and kept alive within the sarcophagus, the link between their physical being and the Dreadnought's systems is absolute and for the remainder of their life. Only awakened from stasis at times of great need, the Chapter's Dreadnoughts fight alongside their former battle brothers, adding armoured might and heavy weapons to an already formidable fighting force.

SPACE MARINE DREADNOUGHT

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Armoured Vehicle	15cm	4+	4+	4+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Missile Launcher	45cm	AP5+/AT6+	—	
Twin Lascannon	45cm	AT4+	—	
OR				
Power Fist	(base contact)	Assault weapon	Macro-weapon, Extra Attacks (+1)	
Assault Cannon	30cm	AP5+/AT5+	—	

Notes: *Walker.* Note that a Dreadnought may be armed with either a Missile Launcher and Twin Lascannon or a Power Fist and Assault Cannon, not all four weapons!



SPACE MARINE BIKE SQUADRON

Space Marine Bike squadrons carry out vital reconnaissance and assault missions, often operating on their own well behind enemy lines. Vital to the Imperial war effort on Armageddon was the continued supply of fresh water pumped from the water purification plants at Phaedra River and St Capilene, both situated in the frozen wastes of the southern continent. Tasked with securing these facilities, Space Marines from the White Scars Chapter mounted raids against the Orks of Gorsnik Magash that were staged there, drawing them into a four week running engagement. Unable

to catch the bike mounted White Scars ,the Orks were forced to fall back in frustration, but not before Suboden Khan's Tulwar Brotherhood had put the Orks' submersible shipyards to the torch. Defeated and demoralised, the Orks were eventually routed from the Deadlands by several bike formations of White Scars that mounted a daring raid on the Ork drop site, crippling their remaining defences and adding another battle honour to the Tulwar's Horsetail Banner.



SPACE MARINE BIKE				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Infantry	35cm	4+	3+	4+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Bolters	(15cm)	Small Arms	—	
Chainswords	(base contact)	Assault weapons	—	
Notes: <i>Mounted</i>				

SPACE MARINE ATTACK BIKE

Attack Bikes bring much needed firepower to Space Marine bike squadrons and are often deployed in support of these fast moving units where their heavy bolters are used to provide long-range fire support, in much the same way that Devastators provide support for Tactical and Assault Marine squads. The incorporation of Attack Bikes into a highly mobile fighting force is particularly favoured by a number of Chapters, not least amongst them the White Scars who use them extensively within

their 'Brotherhoods'. Several Chapters have also used Attack Bike squadrons in their own right as outriders for larger armoured assault forces, as ably demonstrated by the Black Templars at Stygies Bridge where two squadrons of Attack Bikes punched a hole in the Ork lines allowing elements of the Templars Third Crusade Force to secure the northern highway and briefly stem the Ork advance towards Helsreach.



SPACE MARINE ATTACK BIKE				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Light Vehicle	30cm	4+	5+	4+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Heavy bolter	30cm	AP5+	—	





LAND SPEEDER

The discovery of design templates for anti-gravitic plates by the famed Technoarchaologist Arkhan Land during his expedition of the Librarian Omnis on Mars is widely attributed to the eventual construction of the Land Speeder. Used by virtually every Space

Marine Chapter in the Imperium, the Land Speeder's role as a fast reconnaissance and attack vehicle is not underestimated,

especially by the Ultramarines who use over a dozen such vehicles within the 7th and 8th reserve companies alone. The Land Speeder's greatest weakness however is in its thin armour. It was originally designed as an unarmed transport vehicle, and so sacrifices had to be made to the vehicle's ceramite plating in order to carry weapon systems and crewmembers wearing heavy power armour. Because the vehicle is lightly armoured, Land Speeder crews rely on its high manoeuvrability and terrain hugging abilities to evade enemy fire and survive.

SPACE MARINE LAND SPEEDER

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Light Vehicle	35cm	4+	6+	5+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Multi-melta	15cm	MW5+ and Small Arms	Macro-weapon	



Notes: *Skimmer, Scout.* The Multi-melta can shoot and be used to confer the macro-weapon ability to the unit's firefight value.



LAND SPEEDER TORNADO

The Tornado is a more heavily armed version of the Land Speeder designed to provide close support fire. Although not deployed on Armageddon during the early stages of the war, the Dark Angels Chapter is no stranger to the Ork Warlord Ghazghkull Thraka having

faced his forces on Piscina IV. In the days that led up to the night assault on Koth Ridge, members of the Dark Angels'

renowned Ravenwing struck Ghazghkull's camps in a bold daylight raid, cutting the Orks' supply lines and destroying several of their repair yards. Mounted in Tornado pattern Land Speeders, three squadrons evaded the Orks' northern pickets using the hills to mask their approach before descending on the camp strafing it with assault cannons and heavy bolters. Caught completely by surprise, the Orks were slow to react and sustained hundreds of casualties before they were able to return fire. The Speeders broke contact after making two further passes, having only suffered the loss of only a single Tornado to small arms fire.

SPACE MARINE LAND SPEEDER TORNADO

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Light Vehicle	35cm	4+	6+	5+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Assault Cannon	30cm	AP5+ / AT5+	—	
Heavy Bolter	30cm	AP5+	—	



Notes: *Skimmer, Scout*



LAND SPEEDER TYPHOON

The Typhoon is another more heavily armed Land Speeder variant, in this case designed to provide long-range anti-tank fire. After several attempted uprisings on the agri-world of Angarius raised concerns of sedition, two regiments of Pyran Dragoons were sent

to subdue the local populace and detain several political governors. Accompanied by the Strike Cruiser *Ebony Talon* of the Night Hawks Chapter, the task force spent several months

engaged in a bitter war against an increasingly hostile population. In an attempt to capture one of the local leaders, several platoons from the Dragoons 18th battalion found themselves trapped, encircled by Angarian Rebels and cut off from friendly forces. Whilst a rescue mission was mounted, Land Speeder Typhoons from the Night Hawks conducted non-stop sorties throughout the night, pounding the rebel positions with missile salvos and driving them back from the trapped Dragoons. Stopping only to rearm, the Night Hawks' Typhoons kept up the relentless barrage until in the face of the Chapter's furious assaults the rebels withdrew.

SPACE MARINE LAND SPEEDER TYPHOON

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Light Vehicle	35cm	4+	6+	5+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Twin Typhoon missile	45cm	AP3+ / AT5+	—	
Heavy Bolter	30cm	AP5+	—	



Notes: *Skimmer, Scout*

SPACE MARINE VINDICATOR

The Space Marine Vindicator is a heavy support vehicle. During the uprising of Sabien IV, Imperial forces became embroiled in a bitter siege for the manufacturing citadel of Van Valdt. After several failed assaults, the deadlock was eventually broken with the aid of Vindicators from the Iron Hands Chapter who used the tank's reinforced armour and powerful siege cannon to quite literally blast their way into the city. Working in small squadrons of three tanks, the Vindicators and supporting Tactical squads of the Iron Hands 7th company breached the rebel defences time and time again making space

for the supporting Imperial infantry to secure each district. Within five days, the final bastions of rebel resistance had collapsed under the Vindicators' brutal fire bringing to an end a siege that had lasted over three months. Out of a total of seven squadrons, not a single Vindicator was lost making the Van Valdt engagement one of the Iron Hands most successful campaigns to date and ensuring the Vindicators legendary status as 'siege breaker'.



SPACE MARINE VINDICATOR

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Armoured Vehicle	20cm	4+	6+	4+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Demolisher	30cm	AP3+/AT4+	Ignore Cover	



SPACE MARINE WHIRLWIND

The Whirlwind turret provides long ranged fire support for Space Marine Chapters and is most often deployed when a target requires 'softening up' prior to a full scale assault. During the Kharmallan Fields campaign, Whirlwinds belonging to the Black Consuls Chapter conducted a fourteen hour long bombardment of rebel positions in preparation for the launch of the ground offensive. In total over six thousand missiles were launched by the three squadrons of Whirlwinds, resulting in a five mile front being opened up in the rebel lines and the destruction of several key defensive positions. Although the

Black Consuls offensive was deemed a huge success and the ensuing ground assault resulted in the total collapse of the rebel force in the southern continent, all of the Whirlwinds were lost to a surprise counter-strike by a rebel tank battalion. Unprotected and forward of the Consuls' main force the Whirlwinds provided an all too easy target for the enemy tanks. Their loss was a sad blow to the Chapter.



SPACE MARINE WHIRLWIND

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Armoured Vehicle	30cm	5+	6+	5+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Whirlwind	45cm	1BP	Indirect Fire	



SPACE MARINE HUNTER

Until the Hunter Multi-Launcher STC template was unearthed, most Space Marine Chapters lacked any effective anti-air capability. Attempts to retro-fit the Whirlwind for an anti-air role proved to be disastrous, and after several modified Whirlwinds belonging to the Exorcists Chapter failed to engage incoming Ork Bombers most have been withdrawn from active service. Using a different set of targetting algorithms, the hunter missile is both faster and more maneuverable than those launched by the Whirlwind. The Hunter is mounted on the Rhino hull and uses a single launch platform with a side mounted sensor and precognitive targeting array. Missiles are

fed onto the launch rail by a cylindrical drum feed located on the opposite side to the targeters. After launch, fins extend from the body of the missile, allowing it to be guided towards its target. With a longer operational reach compared to the Whirlwind, the Hunter is finding favour with the Tech Adepts of the Adeptus Astartes, some have further modified the launcher to house paired launch units and a central sensor array in an effort to further improve its capabilities.



SPACE MARINE HUNTER

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Armoured Vehicle	30cm	5+	6+	6+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Hunter-killer	60cm	AT4+/AA4+	—	





SPACE MARINE LAND RAIDER

The Land Raider is a heavily armoured battle tank and transport vehicle. The Land Raider's heritage predates even the Imperium, and it is still one of the most devastating tanks in the Adeptus Astartes' arsenal. It is protected by multiple layers of bonded ceramite and adamantium, making it impervious to all bar the most destructive weaponry. It is capable of

operating within virtually any environment, even a vacuum. With transport capacity for a full squad of Space Marines, their field supplies, munitions and medical facilities, the Land Raider is well suited for striking deep behind enemy lines and surviving long periods in the field. Equally impressive is the Land Raider's offensive capabilities, four lascannons and twin-linked heavy bolters allow it to deliver punishing supporting fire capable of smashing through enemy tanks and infantry alike. Although once produced in great numbers there are now few Forge Worlds still able to manufacture them, making the Land Raider one of the Space Marines' most valued artefacts.

SPACE MARINE LAND RAIDER

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Armoured Vehicle	25cm	4+	6+	5+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
2 x Twin Lascannon	45cm	AT4+	—	
Heavy bolter	30cm	AP4+	—	

Notes: Reinforced Armour. Thick Rear Armour. Transport (may carry one Terminator unit OR two of the following units: Space Marine Tactical, Devastator & Scout units)



SPACE MARINE RHINO

For ten millennia, the Rhino has served as the principal armoured transport of the Space Marines. Its versatility and reliability are much prized by the Tech Priests who manage and maintain them for each of the different Space Marine Chapters. The Rhino is capable of transporting up to ten fully equipped Space Marines within its hold, making it ideally

suited for rapid deployment into rugged and hostile conditions where its speed and reinforced ceramite armour are put to good use. Typically, Rhinos are only lightly armed with a single hatch-mounted storm bolter for close support. However the Rhino is a superbly adaptable vehicle, and it is not uncommon for Tech Priests to attach an additional storm bolter onto the spare pintle mount or even retro fit a single hunter killer missile depending upon the circumstances of the Chapter's deployment. Such is the Rhinos success that there are very few Space Marine Chapters that do not maintain a sizeable number of these venerable transports.

SPACE MARINE RHINO

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Armoured Vehicle	30cm	5+	6+	6+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Stormbolter	(15cm)	Small Arms	—	

Notes: Transport (may carry two of the following units: Space Marine Tactical, Devastator & Scout units)



SPACE MARINE RAZORBACK

The combination of armoured transport and support weapon makes the Razorback one of the most versatile vehicles available to the Space Marines, but not necessarily one of the most popular. Viewed by some Chapters as a poor trade off between transport and a fully fledged fighting vehicle, the Razorback nevertheless boasts an

impressive tally of campaign victories. Used extensively by the Space Wolves Chapter for their veteran Grey Hunters, the Razorback's turret mounted heavy weapon system makes up for the often reduced number of members in a Grey Hunter pack as proved during the Mamontov Incursion. Mounted in Razorbacks six Grey Hunter packs from Bjorn Stormwolf's Great Company retook the planet's valuable mineral reprocessing facility using the Razorback's lascannons to knock out the refinery's heavy weapon batteries prior to the assault. Once inside, the Razorbacks defended the perimeter until the Space Wolves' own Predator tanks could be brought in.

SPACE MARINE RAZORBACK

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Armoured Vehicle	30cm	5+	6+	5+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Twin Heavy Bolter	30cm	AP4+	—	
OR Twin Lascannon	45cm	AT4+	—	

Notes: Transport (may carry one of the following units: Space Marine Tactical, Devastator & Scout units)
Note that a Razorback may be armed with either a Twin Heavy Bolter or Twin Lascannon, not both!



PREDATOR ANNIHILATOR

Unusually, the design for the 'Annihilator' variant of the Predator is attributed to the Iron Priests of the Space Wolves Chapter rather than a rediscovered fragment of Dark Age technology. Finding themselves besieged by Traitor armour during the Skarath Crusade and without the support of their Land Raiders, the Space Wolves ingeniously refitted their Predators to carry lascannons normally used by their Long Fang packs. Drawing energy directly from the Predator's thermic power plant, the Annihilator's lascannons were easily a match for the traitor tanks, enabling the Space Wolves to break out from the ring of armour encircling them. Although

the Space Wolves actions were viewed as blasphemy and desecration by the Adeptus Mechanicus, they grudgingly concluded that the design of the 'Annihilator' was successful and two centuries later proclaimed it had the blessing of the Machine God. Favoured by some Chapters and detested by others, the Predator Annihilator is nevertheless manufactured by more than just the Space Wolves.



SPACE MARINE PREDATOR ANNIHILATOR

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Armoured Vehicle	30cm	4+	6+	5+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Twin Lascannon	45cm	AT4+	—	
2 x Lascannon	45cm	AT5+	—	



PREDATOR DESTRUCTOR

In what was possibly the largest deployment of Space Marine heavy armour on Armageddon, Predators from the Salamanders Chapter clashed with Kroksnik's Deth Traks in the ash wastes north of Hive Acheron. Divided into three formations, the Salamander Predators drove an armoured wedge between Kroksnik's forces and the traitor Von Strab, effectively cutting off the Orks from reinforcing Von Strab's supporters within the Hive. Relocating after each assault, the Salamanders harassed the Orks in running engagements for over two days until confronted by Kroksnik's Battle

Fortresses where they forced to withdraw. Returning to the Hemlock Cordon, the Predators were eventually redeployed as part of the Salamanders' offensive against the Ork Rok to the north-east of Acheron. Aided by Legio Metallica Titans, the Salamanders Predators were pivotal in the destruction of two out of the three gigantic asteroid fortresses there.



SPACE MARINE PREDATOR DESTRUCTOR

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Armoured Vehicle	30cm	4+	6+	5+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Autocannon	45cm	AP5+ / AT6+	—	
2 x Heavy Bolter	30cm	AP5+	—	





SPACE MARINE SPACECRAFT

Space Marine Chapters include their own fleet of Battle Barges and Strike Cruisers that are specifically designed to transport the Chapter's troops to battlefields located anywhere in the galaxy. During Ghazghkull's invasion of Armageddon, Battle Barges and Strike

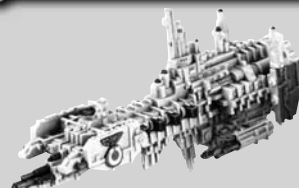
Cruisers from over two dozen Adeptus Astartes Chapters were called to the sector to assist in the planet's defence, their huge bombardment cannons, normally used for planetary assaults

instead turned against the massive Ork invasion fleets. Under the command of the Black Templars High Marshal Helbrecht, the Space Marine fleet, consisting of over one hundred Space Marine craft was pivotal in the destruction of the Ork hulks *Rumbledeth* and *Rokdroppa*. With all of their ground forces committed to the surface of Armageddon, the fleet was then free to assist the remnants of the Imperial Navy for most of the remainder of the war. Those Battle Barges and Strike Cruisers that remained in orbit around Armageddon provided vital support for the Chapter's troops on the ground, either re-supplying them or conducting fire missions with the ship's huge gun batteries, or landing reserve troops straight into battle in drop pods and landing craft.

SPACE MARINE STRIKE CRUISER

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Spacecraft	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Orbital Bombardment	n/a	5BP	Macro-weapon	

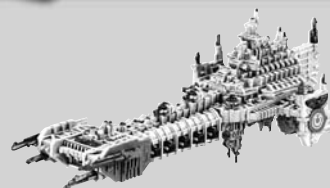
Notes: Transport (may carry twenty of the following units: Space Marine Tactical, Assault, Devastator, Scout, Bike, Terminator or Dreadnought units; plus twenty of the following units: Rhinos, Land Raiders, Razorbacks, Hunters, Whirlwinds, Predators or Vindicators; plus six Thunderhawks and enough Drop Pods or Landing Craft to carry any other units on board).



SPACE MARINE BATTLE BARGE

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Spacecraft	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Orbital Bombardment	n/a	14BP	Macro-weapon	

Notes: Transport (may carry sixty of the following units: Space Marine Tactical, Assault, Devastator, Scout, Bike, Terminator or Dreadnought units; plus sixty of the following units: Rhinos, Land Raiders, Razorbacks, Hunters, Whirlwinds, Predators or Vindicators; plus nine Thunderhawks and enough Drop Pods or Landing Craft to carry any other units on board). Slow and steady – may not be used on the first two turns of a battle unless the scenario specifically says otherwise.



SPACE MARINE LANDING CRAFT

Space Marine Landing Craft are assault vehicles designed to quickly deliver troops to a planet's surface. Like Space Marine Drop Pods they are launched from orbiting spacecraft, the main difference being that a Landing Craft can carry whole detachments of Space

Marines plus their supporting vehicles. After the Landing Craft leaves its parent ship, powerful thrusters quickly accelerate it to speeds of several thousands of kilometres an

hour, making it next to impossible for defence batteries to target as it plummets through a planet's atmosphere. Then, seconds before the Landing Craft is about to hit the ground, ballistic charges blow away the disposable heat shields protecting the landing craft and the vehicles transported upon it, and secondary engines and antigrav devices are employed to rapidly slow down and level out the craft's descent, allowing it to touch down safely. Even before it stops, gun turrets swing into action and hatches slam down to allow the troops inside to deploy. Within twenty or thirty seconds of leaving their spacecraft, any troops and vehicles will be on the ground and in action, supported by the gun batteries mounted on the Landing Craft itself.

SPACE MARINE LANDING CRAFT

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
War Engine	Bomber	4+	5+	3+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
2 x Twin Lascannon	45cm	AT4+	—	
3 x Twin Heavy Bolter	30cm	AP4+	—	
Storm Bolters	(15cm)	Small Arms		

Damage Capacity 4. Critical Hit Effect: The Drop Ship's magazine explodes, destroying the drop ship and anybody on board. Any units within 5cms of the Drop Ship suffer one hit.

Notes: Planetfall, Reinforced Armour. Fearless. Transport (may carry twelve of the following units: Space Marine Tactical, Assault, Devastator, Scout, Bike, Terminator or Dreadnought units. Terminators and Dreadnoughts take up two spaces each. In addition, the Landing Craft can carry four Land Raiders or six of the following units: Rhino, Razorback, Hunter, Whirlwind, Predator, Vindicator).



THUNDERHAWK GUNSHIP

Thunderhawks are heavily armed transport aircraft, used to airlift Space Marines to the battlezone and then provide them with supporting fire. Close to the equatorial jungles on Armageddon, the critically strategic port of Mire Anchorage came close to being overwhelmed by a force of feral Orks hundreds of thousands strong. Massively outnumbered, the five regiments of Hive Militia garrisoned there would have been swept away if not for the timely arrival of two companies from the Storm Lords Chapter. Launched from the orbiting Battle Barge *Dominatus Furio*, three pairs of Thunderhawk Gunships carrying one hundred and eighty

Space Marines descended on Mire Anchorage in one of the boldest aerial drops of the entire campaign. Running the gauntlet of Ork Fighta Bommas, the six Thunderhawks successfully touched down to the west of the port delivering its cargo before immediately lifting off to conduct close support operations for the ground forces. Over the course of the following days and months, the Storm Lords Thunderhawks conducted over three hundred sorties, making them one of the most active airborne units of the war.



SPACE MARINE THUNDERHAWK GUNSHIP

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
War Engine, Aircraft	Bomber	4+	6+	4+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Battle Cannon	75cm	AP4+/AT4+	Fixed Forward Arc	
2 x Twin Heavy Bolter	30cm	AP4+/AA5+	Fixed Forward Arc	
1 x Twin Heavy Bolter	15cm	AP4+/AA5+	Right Fire Arc	
1 x Twin Heavy Bolter	15cm	AP4+/AA5+	Left Fire Arc	



Damage Capacity 2. Critical Hit Effect: The Thunderhawk's control surfaces are damaged. The pilot loses control and the Thunderhawk crashes to the ground, killing all on board.

Notes: Planetfall, Reinforced Armour, Transport (may carry eight of the following units: Space Marine Tactical, Assault, Devastator, Scout, Bike, Terminator or Dreadnought units. Terminators and Dreadnoughts take up two spaces each.)

SPACE MARINE DROP POD

Drop pods are launched from low orbit by the Chapter's Strike Cruisers and Battle Barges, and have been used by the Space Marines for thousands of years as a way of deploying their forces rapidly to a planet's surface. Powered by a single main engine in the pod's core and several small attitude adjustment thrusters, the Drop Pod plummets through the atmosphere before small braking thrusters located underneath the pod arrest its velocity prior to landing. Capable of holding five power armoured Space Marines and their equipment, thick ceramite plating around the base of

the pod protects the Space Marines from the fierce temperatures of re-entry as well as providing an armoured platform from which to fight from. Once on the ground, locking clamps release the side doors and restraining bars, allowing the Space Marines to deploy quickly from the pod and straight into combat. Although not confirmed, it is rumoured that the elapsed time between touch down and deployment is under four seconds.



SPACE MARINE DROP POD

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Armoured Vehicle	Immobile	5+	none	none
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Deathwind	15cm	AP5+/AT5+	See special rules below.	

Notes: Planetfall, Transport (may carry one formation that includes only Tactical, Devastator, Scout and Dreadnought units). After the drop pod lands, its Deathwind attacks all enemy units within 15cms. Each enemy formation attacked receives a Blast marker for coming under fire, and an extra Blast marker for each casualty. Then any troops carried in the drop pod must disembark within 5cms of the drop pod or within 5cms of another unit from the same formation that has already landed, so long as all units are placed within 15cms of the drop pod. Drop pods may not be used to claim a crossfire.

Design Concept: In reality, each Space Marine unit in the formation will be carried in a separate drop pod. The drop pods are all fired off together in a tight pattern so that they land near to each other. Each such pattern of drop pods will be accompanied by one or two Deathwind pods, which are fired slightly ahead of the transport pods and which use automated weapon-systems to shoot at enemy units in the landing area. The special rule above captures this well, without requiring players to use lots of drop pod models.

